

# PROVINCETOWN

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VOLUME 3, NUMBER 1

SUMMER 1987 \$3.50



*"This is a town you could see yourself  
digging in and fighting for."*

NORMAN MAILER

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## PROVINCETOWN ARTS

P.O. Box 35, Provincetown, Massachusetts • (617) 487-3167, 349-2333

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## CONTENTS

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### The Tough Guys Section

Handsome as an Old Truck	<b>16</b>	Edward Bonetti with Christopher Busa
Camera Angles: Reporters on the Set of "Tough Guys"	<b>18</b>	Gregory Katz, Bonnie Barber
Tough Talk: A Conversation with Peter Manso	<b>22</b>	Raymond Elman
Letter Number 2 from the Hamptons	<b>26</b>	B. H. Friedman
Tough Lady: A Conversation with Pat de Groot	<b>28</b>	Christopher Busa

### Art in Nature

Earthworks	<b>36</b>	Eleanor Munro
Susan Lyman	<b>39</b>	Susan Lyman
Bert & Cynthia	<b>40</b>	Bert Yarborough & Cynthia Huntington
Here, The Wind The Calm Is Such A Long Way Off	<b>43</b>	Poem by Michael McGuire Poem by Candice Reffe
Sublime: a Philosophical Inquiry into the Beautiful, Sublime, and Picturesque	<b>44</b>	Charles Giuliano
Dissolving Clouds	<b>47</b>	Peter Hutchinson

### Fiction & Memoirs

The Man in the Chair	<b>52</b>	Anne Bernays
The Early Days of the Provincetown Theater Company	<b>58</b>	Charles Horne
Dreaming in Public: A Provincetown Memoir	<b>62</b>	Susan Mitchell

### Artists, Historians, & Dealers

The Renaissance of Weldon Kees	<b>68</b>	James Reidel
Weldon Kees: Enemy of Mediocrity	<b>72</b>	Fritz Bultman
The Observer as Intruder: Budd Hopkins on Sculpture & UFOs	<b>76</b>	April Kingsley
Myron Stout: Selections from the Artist's Journals	<b>80</b>	Myron Stout
Couples	<b>83</b>	Vicky Tomayko & Jim Peters
Ciro & Sal's, a Memoir	<b>86</b>	Edward Giobbi with Christopher Busa
Excerpts from the China Journals	<b>88</b>	Joan Lebold Cohen
Fish House Studios	<b>90</b>	George Bryant
Conversations with Art Dealers	<b>94</b>	Christopher Busa

### Exhibitions — Pages 98 to 112

The Last Laugh	<b>130</b>	Howie Schneider
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*PREVIEW PARTY & SILENT AUCTION:*  
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**EXHIBITION SCHEDULE**

**JUNE 16 - JUNE 27**  
BERENICE ABBOTT  
Photographs  
  
**JUNE 30 - JULY 11**  
ROBERT MOTHERWELL  
GALLERY CHOICE

**JULY 14 - JULY 25**  
YOUNG TALENT  
Curtiss R. Brock  
Nancy Fried  
Jason Hunsinger  
Monique Johannet  
Kathleen Loe  
Christina Schlesinger

**JULY 28 - AUGUST 8**  
Paintings-Drawings  
5 HALLS AND A WILLIAMS

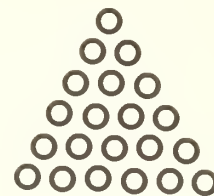
**AUGUST 11 - AUGUST 22**  
DAVID HOCKNEY  
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Summer Survey

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June 28—July 11

July 12—25

July 26—Aug. 8

August 9—22

Aug. 23—Sept. 11

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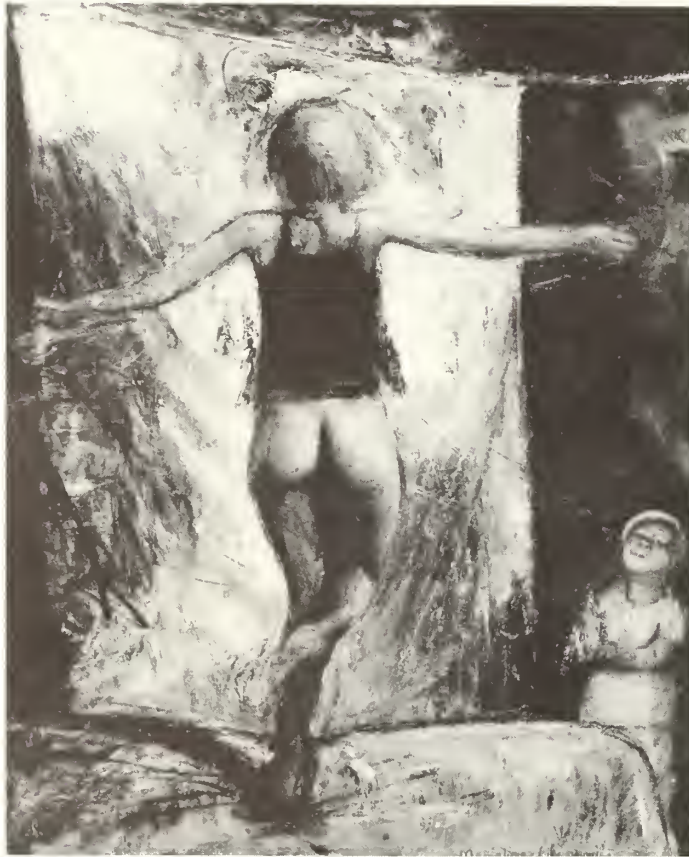
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JIM PETERS, "Movietime: Life Prevails", 1984, oil on canvas, 61 x 54"

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KEITH HARING  
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JULY 17 - 30

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EWA NOGIEC-SMITH

JULY 31 / AUG. 13

BARBARA BAUM

PETEE BROWN

AUGUST 14 - 27

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1987



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- JULY
- 1 WINTER WORKS '87—OPEN GROUP
  - 8 PRINT SHOW—OPEN GROUP
  - 15 PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW—OPEN GROUP
  - 22 JEAN ROGERS
  - 29 SENSUOUS LINE—GROUP GROUP
- AUGUST
- 5 THE SCULPTOR & STUDENTS
  - 12 WILLIAM WHITEMAN INVITATIONAL
  - 19 THE PAINTER & STUDENTS
  - 26 SUMMER WORKS '87—OPEN GROUP

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Sept. 12 Return to the Past


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## Summer Schedule of EXHIBITIONS

MAY 29 - JUNE 21

YOUNG ARTISTS EXHIBITION

ARNOLD GEISSBUHLER

AGAINST BROADWAY: Art Theater

PROVINCETOWN PAINTERS: 1915

JUNE 26 - JULY 19

CROSSCURRENTS: PAA&M Collection

MEMBERS' JURIED: Sculpture/  
Drawing

JULY 24 - AUGUST 16

MEMBERS' OPEN EXHIBITION

LEO MANSO

PAA&M Collection

AUGUST 21 - SEPTEMBER 27

MEMBERS' PRIZE COMPETITION

CHARLIE ZEHNDER

PAA&M Collection

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carol hepper  
amanda kyser  
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FOR

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solo exhibition  
JULY 11 - AUGUST 2

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mary mallot  
diane mayo  
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This exhibition was made possible by a grant from  
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### JULY WORKSHOPS

- 6 Landscape Painting, *Dan Ziembo*  
Beachcombers' Weaving, *Johanna Erickson*  
Painting Still Life and the Figure, *Lisa Yuskavage*  
Pastel, the Figure and Landscape, *Robert DuToit*  
Poetry Workshop, *Alan Dugan*
- 7 Principles of Life Drawing, *Tony Vevers*  
Painting-Mixed Media Workshop, *Jim Peters and Paul Bowen*  
How to Write for Children, *Nancy Dingman Watson*  
Creative Arts for Therapists, *Lynda Sturmer*
- 8 Wednesday Night Lecture Series
- 10 Collage and Monotype, *Joan Pereira*
- 11 Saturday Classes for Children, *Elsbeth Halvorsen*
- 13 Working From the Landscape, *Salvatore Del Deo*  
Interpretive Watercolor, *Elizabeth Pratt*  
Woven Wall Hangings, *Fausta Weingeist*  
Bookmaking/Image Making, *Rosalind Pace and Marcia Simon*
- 20 Painting: "Expressionism," *Leslie Jackson*
- 21 Abstraction From Nature, *Joan McD Miller*  
Drawing Fundamentals, *Leslie Jackson*  
Small Works in Stone, *Joyce Johnson*
- 23 Open Critiques
- 25 Seeing What's Around You, *Joel Meyerowitz*
- 27 Capturing Light With Paint, *Charles Sovek*
- 31 Fiction Workshop, *Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter*

### AUGUST WORKSHOPS

- 3 Capturing Light With Paint, *Charles Sovek*  
Batik Fabric Design, *Marilyn Patton*  
Painting Still Life and the Figure, *Salvatore Del Deo*  
Color Form and Interval, *Jim Forsberg*  
Poetry Workshop, *Alan Dugan*
- 4 Collage, *Rosalind Pace*  
Study of the Human Figure, *Ethel Edwards*  
Painting-Mixed Media Workshop, *Jim Peters and Paul Bowen*  
Creative Arts for Therapists, *Lynda Sturmer*
- 5 Memoir Writing, *E.J. Kahn, Jr. and Eleanor Munro*
- 7 Fiction Workshop, *Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter*
- 8 Saturday Classes for Children, *Elsbeth Halvorsen*
- 17 Landscape Watercolor Painting, *Rita Derjue*  
Construction With Found Objects, *Anna Poor*  
Clay Figure Sculpture, *Anne Lord*
- 22 Landscape Photography, *Larry Maglott*
- 31 Working From the Landscape, *Salvatore Del Deo*  
Painting Workshop, *Joan Hopkins Coughlin*

### SEPTEMBER WORKSHOP

- 1 Plaster Reliefs, *Anna Poor*

To register, call 349-7511

# Auction

ARTWORKS

at the Customs House Gallery, Wellfleet

## Sun. Aug. 2

Preview Sat. Aug. 1, 10 a.m.—5 p.m.  
Sun. Aug. 2, 10 a.m.—1 p.m.  
Auction 3:00 p.m.

**Dick Flavin Auctioneer**

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**Daphne Hellman Music**

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*The gallery represents artists of any medium who are captured in this borderline between love and madness.*

*Provincetown artists who were featured in our first season at Limerance were Laurel Brooke, Keith Donahue, Mary Weeder, Marian Roth, Nicoletta Poli and Kate Millett.*

Honey Black Kay

Laurel Brooke

Keith Donahue

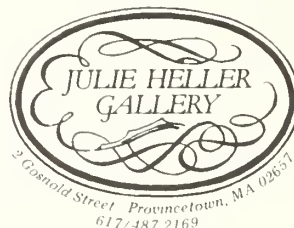
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EAST END  
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JUNE 19 — JULY 2  
VICKY TOMAYKO

JULY 3 — 16  
ELIZABETH AWALT  
PETER HUTCHINSON  
PETER PLAMONDON

JULY 17 — 30  
LINDA ETCOFF  
GARRY MITCHELL  
PATRICK WEBB

JULY 31 — AUGUST 13  
AARON FINK  
CHUCK HOLTZMAN  
JIM PETERS

AUGUST 14 — 27  
PAUL BOWEN  
JAMES HANSEN  
SALLYANN WEKSTEIN

AUGUST 28 — SEPTEMBER 14  
VIVIAN BOWER  
ARTHUR COHEN  
ANNA POOR

424 COMMERCIAL STREET  
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DIRECTOR:  
CHRISTOPHER BUSA

# HANDSOME AS AN OLD TRUCK

*Edward Bonetti talks  
with Christopher Busa*

**Edward Bonetti:** Regarding *Tough Guys*, I thought the reviewers were kinda hard on Norman, kinda tough with him. It was the same with *Ancient Evenings*, a great book. It pisses them off that Norman can still be macho. But now Norman travels in that rarified air of celebrity. He's changed in the last ten years. He can't help it. There's an aura around him, an automatic thing that goes on in the blood. There's a kind of security of social class that is akin to the security that a biographer feels over the imaginative writer. The biographer and non-fiction writer can take strength from his material and can avoid facing the possibility of failure; the material only has to be gathered.

**CB:** What have you learned from Mailer?

**EB:** When a character functions on the page

independently of the author, he depends on magic, I learned from Norman, after I learned it from my own experience. When Mailer was working on *Tough Guys* the book, his publisher was on his back and he had to get the thing done. I said, "How the hell are you going to get all that done in such a short time, Norman?" He said, "I'm slaving my balls off and I'm hoping for a lot of magic." He wrote it in six weeks and the dialogue is sharp as voodoo darts.

**CB:** What part did you play in *Tough Guys*, the film?

**EB:** In Mailer's movie, I was in a scene that was supposed to be in Tampa, Florida. We shot it in the Barnstable County Jail. To get people sweating, they came by and squirted water in our faces. Nice people, those movie

people. I was in jail with Ryan O'Neal. He was lying down on the cot, after just being thrown in jail. I came up to him and said, "What are you in for?" He said, "Dealing." I said, "Coke's a bad bust in Florida, Dude." He said, "I should never have left New York." And I said, "Everyone has their own sad story." After six takes, the crew applauded. Ryan told me, "Jesus, Eddie, you're talking too fast. Most actors want to stay on the screen forever." He's got a sense of humor, and both Ryan and Norman signed copies of the books that the real convicts presented them through the bars. They were all watching, and kept quiet when the shooting started.

**CB:** Mailer has a great way of imagining a man's female lover in sexual encounters with the man's enemy.

**EB:** It's a central fantasy, the most volatile sexual situation in an adult male's life, mainly because of the residue of impotence, an Oedipal impotence that every man inevitably felt when he was small and women were large and the men who loved women were larger than him. It haunts the male character. I think it haunts Norman and he translates it into some ghost in his male characters. Who is this guy Tim Madden, the Ryan O'Neal figure in the movie? He's a writer, but a failed writer. He's a thwarted lover. His wife has left him, he wakes up drunk while the gulls on the bare flats eat away at his liver, like Prometheus being gnawed at, for stealing fire from the gods. I hope Norman forgives me, but I sense a lot of humor in *Tough Guys Don't Dance*. He had a good time writing a book he had to blast through fast.

**CB:** Whether you are a writer or a pauper, booze is always a curse.

**EB:** Everybody's got his demon if he is close to a creative act, because it's so abnormal to create, especially something good and worth while. I've been influenced as a writer by my friendship with Norman. He says I've a face like a Mack truck, but really as a tough guy, I'm a softie. When I was sixteen, I boxed Golden Gloves and the New England Amateur Athletic Union, and I beat the champion, who was twenty. I was in good shape then. Then I saw my father below the ring's apron, looking up at me with this expression that said, "What are you trying to prove?" How can a boy fight with that in back of him: a father that doesn't want him to fight? I said, "What the fuck are you doing here, then?"

**CB:** Like the boxing ring, the psychiatrist's office, the artist's studio, the poet's study, and the lover's bed, Provincetown seems to be a place where certain ordinary rules are suspended in order to establish a privileged atmosphere. For writers like yourself and Mailer, Provincetown occupies that defined, privileged space where subjective conditions can be developed at the expense of prevailing conventions, the bureaucratic tidal wash that dominates the usual discourse that passes for culture in this country.

**EB:** This country's industries are ownerless, but down here in P-town, even the village idiot has a name. You don't find suits down here—"suits" being Dick Goodwin's term for corporate types. There's a mood beneath all the changes that have happened to P-town, something I won't call eternal, but which I remember like the smell I first smelled coming off the Steel Pier, the boat I took with my mother from Boston, when she was fighting with my father, a smell—did you ever have the experience?—looking at a flat bay, about six or seven o'clock at night, the sun not quite beginning to set, and there's a waft that comes in from the ocean, pungent and vegetal, which comes from the east. That's been with me always. That's the beauty of the olfactory nerves, I guess, an element of hope coming through as if from the back side. A smell that can smell wonderful, refreshing. A suicidal anxiety is probably ameliorated by the smell

of that water. The smell of clean weeds, a growth that is green not so much like money as like the shiny dimes and quarters that the kids used to dive for off the end of the pier. There is so much that I love here that exists only in my memory.

**CB:** What was your father like?

**EB:** My father was a song-and-dance man with the Keith Vaudevillians. He had a streak of the artist and he knew that the artist's life was a life of difficulty, and so he discouraged me from following him into show business. Our family moved out of the North End of Boston. When I was born he was out in Ohio somewhere. My mother said, "You've got to come back and help." He'd always send us bread back, generously, until he was forced to come back and make more money. He told us, "There's a prize out there. You've got to work to reach for it. But you can't take it. You can study the piano, practice your ass off, but you can't go out and perform in a show." Now my sister has a professional voice and she sings in the shower. During the Depression, my father schemed, he had a small store, he played the numbers in the Italian neighborhood. I remember he burned my football uniform in the furnace because he didn't want me to get hurt in the game.

**CB:** Did you get to know your editor at Viking, Jackie Kennedy?

**EB:** I had dinner with Jackie in Hyannisport just before my little book, *The Wine Cellar*, came out. I promised her I would not mention her name during the act of publication, but now time has passed. I had a wonderful dinner with her, I behaved myself, not too much booze, and not too many people from the literary world because Jackie felt the literary world was so mean, as per example the man who reviewed my book for the *New York Times*, a hack hanger-on whose own book had just been rejected by Viking.

**CB:** He is damned and unloved and has bad dreams each night.

**EB:** The literary world, its crowds and groups, reminds me of the corporate world, and I've always instinctively shied away. The *Times* reviewer is typical of the butchers of literature one would prefer to avoid. What he didn't like, he didn't like, not for its own failings, but for the psychological threats it posed to him. That jealousy came out. I don't think there's any field of endeavor that carries with it so much potential to make enemies as literature. The reason is that to be good the writing's got to get under the skin. Like the Indian carving the totem, as Mailer says, the words must be cut gravely, and deeply, so they may last, so their meanings may endure like marks in hardwood. My books are skinny because I weigh every word. I tell people, "If you want to make my books bigger, either read them or piss on them, so they swell."

*Edward Bonetti is the author of The Wine Cellar. He lives in Boston and makes frequent trips to Provincetown. His latest book is A Baker's Dozen Plus, a collection of stories and poems.*

# CAMERA ANGLES

## REPORTERS ON THE SET OF "TOUGH GUYS"



NORMAN MAILER, RYAN O'NEAL & ISABELLA ROSSELLINI

### BONNIE BARBER

Provincetown has been a creative haven for artists and writers for over eighty years, but the writer who has made the heaviest imprint on Provincetown's sands in the latter half of this century is Norman Mailer. At age 64, Mailer has mellowed considerably from his early days in Provincetown, a time when he was best known for throwing wild parties and for being locked up on drunk and disorderly charges after a night of carousing on Commercial Street—actions that served to enhance Mailer's reputation as the bad boy novelist of his generation, a reputation he seemed to relish and encourage. But the volatile Mailer has curtailed his combustibility of late to add a new title to his distinction as one of America's preeminent literary figures cum celebrities: that of major motion picture director.

With this new occupation came new responsibilities. Mailer had to prove to Hollywood studio heads late last year that he could bring in the film adaptation of his 1984 murder mystery, *Tough Guys Don't Dance*, on budget and on time. Mailer did better. He brought the film in under budget and completed it a day and a half under the film's forty-one-day shooting schedule, in mid-December. And it was all done away from the watchful eyes of Hollywood—in Provincetown, the sight of so many of Mailer's past triumphs and, sometimes, dismal failures.



photo: Joel Meyerowitz

### GREGORY KATZ

In the middle of a driving November rainstorm, lighting technicians had turned the inside of Pepe's into what passed for a Florida restaurant in the hot sun. Pastels and bright colors dominated the decor, and waiters were dressed in white. Ryan O'Neal came from his trailer—an aide holding an umbrella above his head—and took his place at a table as Norman Mailer called for action.

But O'Neal didn't speak his lines. Instead, his eyes focused on me. His voice angry and tense, he said, "I can't do it. There's a stranger on the set."

I had been sitting behind a lighting stand, trying to look inconspicuous, but suddenly the star wouldn't act because of my presence on the set. O'Neal sounded like a stuck pig. Mailer went to Ryan, told the actor who I was and that he had invited me to watch this scene, and I got up and announced I was leaving the set. In moviemaking, time is money to the nth degree, and I didn't want this dead time on my hands. As I left, O'Neal was denouncing the publicity people for not warning him that I would be there.

I retreated to a back room and sat quietly for ten minutes until a public relations specialist came over to ask me to come back: "Ryan says he can't do it without you," she said with a straight face. I came back smiling, glad I could help O'Neal face the day. It was an appropriate welcome to the Hollywood



photo: Bonnie Barber





photo Bonnie Barber

## BONNIE BARBER

Mailer first came to Provincetown in 1942 as a Harvard undergraduate who dreamed of being a writer. When he returned to Provincetown in 1946 after a hitch in World War II, he sequestered himself in a Beach Point cottage to work on his first novel. That book, *The Naked and the Dead*, brought the twenty-four-year-old writer acclaim and adulation and firmly ensconced him as a rising American literary force.

But movies were always Mailer's dream, and he wasn't content to simply conquer the publishing world. He wanted to take Hollywood by storm too, and live the life of a successful screenplay writer. As he told a friend at Harvard, all he wanted was to be a good professional writer. That friend, George Washington Goethals, related in Peter Manso's book, *Mailer: His Life and Times*: "He said his aspiration was to be a good enough professional to go to Hollywood and write scripts, make some good bread, and screw a different woman every night."

After an unsuccessful foray in Hollywood, Mailer returned to Provincetown, in 1950. He had one screenplay under his belt, which was never produced by a studio, and a host of other projects that he had turned down. He did get a book out of his stint in Hollywood though. *The Deer Park*, which was published in 1955, chronicled the lusts, loves, and ambitions of the celebrity inhabitants of Desert D'Or and their groupies.

Mailer never abandoned his motion picture dreams, however. These dreams eventually grew, from a desire merely to write screenplays, to wanting to direct a big-budget film of one of his novels. When Mailer finally attained this dream last fall, he managed to secure the best of both worlds; he brought Hollywood to Provincetown for the making of *Tough Guys Don't Dance*. Although a more

inexpensive location in North Carolina was considered for the film's backdrop, it seemed inevitable that Mailer and his film crew would wind up in Provincetown. In transplanting a California film crew and cast to the narrow streets and the dunes of Provincetown, Mailer seemed to be asking his seaside mistress to reward him once again with her magic touch.

The film company that gave Mailer the financial means to direct *Tough Guys Don't Dance* was Cannon Films, a Los Angeles-based company headed by Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus. Despite the critical and commercial failure of three experimental, improvised films Mailer had directed and financed in the late 1960's—*Wild 90*, *Beyond the Law*, and *Maidstone*—the two Israelis were willing to give Mailer a chance to try his talents at directing a major motion picture. They struck a deal: If Mailer agreed to write the screenplay for *King Lear*, a film project of avant-garde director Jean-Luc Godard, who has a penchant for not adhering closely to scripts, Cannon Films would give Mailer a \$5-million budget to write the screenplay and to direct *Tough Guys Don't Dance*. Tom Luddy, a producer with Zoetrope Studios in San Francisco, who helped arrange the deal with Cannon, would be the producer.

When filming began in late October, Mailer was obviously elated to be fulfilling his directorial dreams. He bounded around Outer Cape locations, from Uncle Tim's Bridge in Wellfleet, to the Methodist cemetery in Truro, to Provincetown Airport, buried in a navy-blue parka to fight the often brutally cold weather, with a black knit ski hat perched atop his silver curls. Despite the biting chill, heavy winds, driving rain or snow the film crew encountered on any given day, Mailer's cherubic face was beaming more often than

not. He clapped his hands together frequently, although it wasn't clear whether this was the result of nervous energy or excessive enthusiasm. His excitement was contagious, and his energy and vigor astounded crew members. Although many of the crew were half his age, they had difficulty keeping up with Mailer's whirlwind pace. He swigged orange and lemon-lime Gatorade during breaks in filming, and joked that he was a testament to the product's claim of infusing those who drink it with energy and endurance. "If I drink enough of this stuff, I'll get another book out, no problem," Mailer chortled.

Even actress Isabella Rossellini, who reportedly was not enamored of Mailer's directorial style, tactfully avoided answering a question about Mailer's directing, at the Cannes Film Festival in May, by commenting instead on his boundless enthusiasm and energy. "Hmm. Well, it was wonderful to watch him having fun. He got up at dawn and loved making every part of the film," Rossellini was quoted in the *Boston Globe*.

Rossellini, who refused to give any interviews while filming in Provincetown, saying that she never discusses a film she is working on until it has been completed, was not the only actor disenchanted with Mailer as a director. Wings Hauser and Frances Fisher also had disagreements and misunderstandings with Mailer on the set, and voiced their unhappiness in an interview for a *Newsday* article. Actor Ryan O'Neal, however, called Mailer one of the best directors he has ever worked with, and praised his skills as an "actor's director."

Besides some strife on the set, Mailer also had to contend with a strike against Cannon Films by the International Alliance of Theater (Continued on page 116)



DEBRA SANDLUND BEFORE LOSING HER HEAD

## GREGORY KATZ

P.R. machine.

Later, near the end of a twelve-hour day in Pepe's bar, O'Neal—wearing a Hawaiian shirt and looking tan—was sweeping the floor before a key scene with Debra Sundland, his leading lady. The scene was flat and tempers were short—everyone seemed to be thinking of dinner at Napi's instead of the action.

"Take eleven," called a weary technician. The first ten takes had been ruined: O'Neal's broom cast an unwanted shadow over Sundland's bosom, a camera battery died, a fly buzzed the set, and O'Neal accidentally splintered a shot glass he was using to drink Chivas Regal.

"This is the first time we've needed eleven takes," O'Neal said testily. Mailer, in a deep baritone, conceded the point: "We could have printed long ago, but I'm looking for something special."

Then it clicked. The three actors each tried something a tiny bit different, and the scene came alive. "I like it; let's print," said Mailer. O'Neal, free at last, said: "He was right. I can't believe it: he was right."

Norman Mailer, director. He likes the sound of it. At first, it seemed odd that he would give up the typewriter for the director's chair. Why would Mailer—acutely conscious that time is passing and that he's getting closer to the end of his working life—turn his back on the novel for something as risky as a mystery movie? In days gone by, Mailer would have concocted an elaborate, art-oriented answer about the power of visual images. But now he's comfortable enough to tell the truth: directing is fun, and a welcome change from trying to pump life into an empty page.

"You know, when you're writing a novel it's as if you're in debt," he said. "I've been in debt all my life, and the sensation is not one

you'd enjoy. You wake up in the morning, and the number, the amount of money you owe, is on your head. And with a novel, exactly the same thing is true. You've got that ongoing book, which is either going to go in the right direction or in the wrong direction. With debt, you think you've got to go out and earn some money, and you think, How will I gain enough money in this much time? With a novel you always think, If I take this route, will it lead into a cul-de-sac? Will I have to back up? And if so, there'll just be hell to pay. A novel is terribly worrisome, and your life gnaws at you. I wouldn't call the empty page so much frightening as nagging, as obsessive. Directing is altogether different because I find, surprisingly enough, there's very little fear in it."

For a man known for his outbursts and temper, Mailer seemed surprisingly jovial on the set. He regarded the making of *Tough Guys* as a military exercise that might or might not succeed. Mailer said he learned a crucial lesson from Gary Gilmore—the convicted murder whose life Mailer chronicled in *The Executioner's Song*.

"Gilmore said, 'Nobody said it had to be fair,' and that's an enormously useful line pertaining to a movie director," said Mailer. "I won't let myself get upset. If something goes wrong, I shrug. If something goes right, I shrug. The key thing is to start each day relatively as fresh as the day before. It's amazingly less tense than I thought it would be, probably because I'm sixty-three. I think if I had tried it thirty years ago it would have killed me, but now I just have the attitude that it will succeed or fail, and one does one's best. One of the marvelous things that makes this much easier than novel writing is that you don't bear total responsibility. If you fail, it may be your fault or it may be that the gods were disposed against you. There are so many

imponderables that can explode in your face at any moment. There are just so many catastrophes that are part of making a film—everyone can be working at his full talent and an important truck will go off the road, you'll lose eight days, and there's panic everywhere. It's very much like the army."

The entire enterprise reminded him of his army days. The need for stamina and good humor. The pressure to produce quickly without getting caught in the muck. The need for camaraderie and fellowship when it would be easy to be bitchy and cruel.

"What it really reminds me of is ideal war," he said. "It's having a campaign, but nobody gets shot; there's no blood, but there's all the fun of being in the army. The army was nine-tenths boredom and one-tenth fun, the kind of mad, manic fun Coppola caught in *Apocalypse Now*. Maybe a movie is that kind of fun, with the fact that there is no carnage. It is like a campaign: you eat outside standing up; everybody starts the day having breakfast together; it's a communal exercise. You move to different places every day; there are new problems every day; the campaign moves here, moves there; it's going to be over in forty-two days. It's like hunting with a camera in Africa."

But there's one key difference, as Mailer talks nostalgically about army life. In World War II, he was a foot soldier. This time around, to use the military analogy, he was the general.

"I was a G.I. at twenty-one—why can't I be a general at sixty-three?" he said. "I can't pretend that I know more about film than everyone else on the set, so I'm a democratic general. It's as if I'm politically appointed."

How good a general? What was it like living under Norman Mailer's rule? There was  
(Continued on page 117)

# ALTSME

van de Kerk

van de Kerk



# TOUGH TALK

## A CONVERSATION WITH PETER MANSO

*Edited by Raymond Elman*

*Peter Manso, long-time resident of Provincetown, has written for many magazines, as well as being the author of a half dozen books, including his recent controversial biography, Mailer, His Life and Times. He is currently working on a biography of Marlon Brando.*

**Raymond Elman:** For almost as long as I've known you, it seemed to me that you were working on the Mailer book. I met you in the winter of 1972-'73, and you were already talking about doing a biography of Norman Mailer. How long has that been a project?

**Peter Manso:** I'd been thinking about doing a biography of Norman Mailer after I had edited a book on the Mailer-Breslin political campaign in '69, a compendium of Mailer's and Breslin's speeches, essays by various hands, plus the campaign's position papers, which I'd written week to week during the course of what turned out to be my introduction to electoral politics.

**Christopher Busa:** That's where you got your political background, via Mailer?

**PM:** Not really, although paradoxically the Mailer-Breslin campaign was probably the closest I came to getting any kind of background in orthodox politics. I'd just come from Berkeley—the legendary Berkeley of the sixties—yet when the campaign started I didn't know what a "white paper" was. On the other hand, I can remember handing out leaflets for Henry Wallace when I was eight years old. But, that's another tradition.

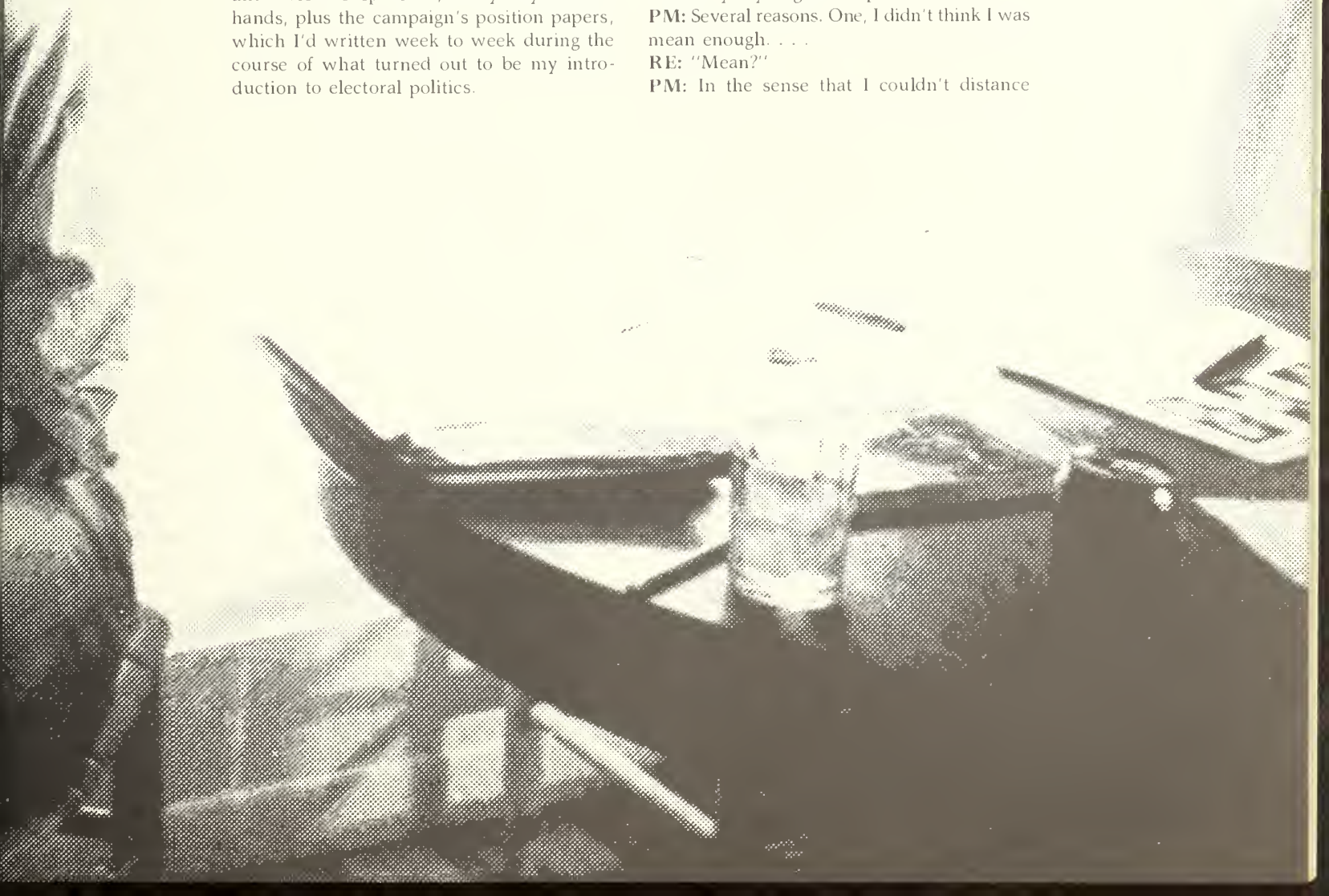
In any case, having done the anthology *Running Against the Machine*, I was offered a contract to do the bio, and so you remember correctly: I tried to write that book back in the early seventies, then gave up on it.

**RE:** Why'd you give it up?

**PM:** Several reasons. One, I didn't think I was mean enough. . . .

**RE:** "Mean?"

**PM:** In the sense that I couldn't distance



myself enough from Mailer, absolutely.

**CB:** You had a lot of notes, a lot of pages typed, a lot of materials gathered.

**PM:** Correct. I was going to set the book up in alternate chapters: one set of chapters about Mailer, the other set on Dashiell Hammett. Through their two lives I wanted to say something about maleness, styles of toughness, if you will. I don't mean to suggest that it was going to be a book of literary criticism. Quite the contrary. I saw and still do see Mailer and Hammett in different terms. Hammett's contribution to literature may even be greater than Mailer's, but I really don't want to argue that, if only because it's probably a losing argument.

**CB:** It's almost like Hammett is a character of Mailer's imagination.

**PM:** Hardly, if only because Norman's imagination is so self-reflective. *The Maltese Falcon*, Hammett's best novel, offers us the most marvelous maxim—"The gaudier the crook, the cheaper the patter"—and it's something entirely beyond Norman's comprehension. I once asked Mailer about Hammett, and he told me one of his quite misleading stories, which was subsequently disproven by another famous liar, Lillian Hellman, when I got around to interviewing her for the Mailer biography.

**RE:** When did you interview her?

**PM:** Just shortly before her death, before she went up to the Vineyard. Norman had spoken of how he'd once met Hammett at a bar in New York and how the two of them sat shoulder to shoulder through long silences until Hammett said, "*The Naked and the Dead* was an extraordinary book, and I think you're quite an extraordinary man." Well, memory may betray us all, but Hellman presented quite another picture: namely, that at the time Norman was let out of Bellevue after having almost killed Adele, his second wife, he called Hellman in the middle of the night, from a public phone booth, desperate for money, and Hammett, who was beside Hellman as she took the call, wouldn't let her go and give him a wooden nickel. So who knows where the truth is?

**RE:** The most common criticism that I've heard about your Mailer book is that by offering multiple points of view of a given event, the reader never really knows what the truth is.

**PM:** Leave aside, for the moment, that I did not want to inject my own voice because of my personal relationship with Mailer. What I realized was that the "truth" is always a protean proposition. Shall I invoke Heisenberg, the principles of quantum physics? Do you want me to point out that ninety-eight percent of all biographies are based mainly on previously written materials? Or that history, received history, tends to be an amalgam of received information, however it's couched? I wasn't going to do that. With the exception of book review samples indicative of how Mailer was being treated professionally, everything in *Mailer, His Life and Times* is original. As to the issue of my refusing to take

the reader by the hand with my own judgments or interpretations, here too I felt it best to put Mailer in his cultural context and let the material speak for itself. The act of shaping and editing these materials, not to say creating the book's text from over 25,000 pages of transcript, is an act of judgment in itself, as any trial lawyer will tell you. There's a certain authority to the invisible author, and I think this is precisely what Mailer can't stand about the book. He can't confront—or confute—the testimony of 200 individuals, his mother and sister among them.

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"The premise of an oral biography is that no one's single version of an event can be taken as accurate."

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"This is not a book about a man who simply sits at a desk, because this guy's always engaged."

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**RE:** So, for example, there was no way to pin down the origination of the word "fug" in *The Naked and the Dead*?

**PM:** Would you like a quick and easy answer? Norman at one point gave me his version and said, "God damn it, go up to Yale and look at the manuscript." Well, it occurred to me to go to Yale because, God knows, I went to Arkansas, to California, to the wastelands of New Jersey and Brooklyn researching this thing, but I wouldn't put it past Norman to alter the manuscript before he gave it to Yale. Norman is going to be the final authority on

Norman Mailer? Come on! Norman is the biggest literary careerist of the 20th century. I know this, just as I know how his vanity moved him to try to get me to change my manuscript, and anyone who has trouble with that notion is welcome to review his marginalia on my final draft.

But let's come back to your question, because I think it's a meaningful question. The premise of an oral biography is that no one's single version of an event can be taken as accurate. We all have an ax to grind, consciously or otherwise, and the answer is to take a page out of the CIA's book—it's called triangulation. You get multiple versions of an event, and you assume that the truth lies somewhere in the midst of the triangle described by those three different versions. Why did I do it that way? One reason is that I realized that there's no way I was going to do a literary biography of Mailer, because whether Norman likes it or not, his importance historically will not be that of a writer but that of a phenomenon. In other words, one of Norman's greatest criticisms about my book is that I don't take him seriously enough as a writer. Well, Norman, you can take yourself seriously as a writer, and most definitely I take you seriously, having given four years of my life; but when I began this book the approach was Norman Mailer as existential phenomenon, not as bookish writer. You can't think of Norman as you do of Saul Bellow, or Philip Roth, or Bernard Malamud. This is not a book about a man who simply sits at a desk, because this guy's always engaged.

**RE:** If you had to do your book all over again, what would you change?

**PM:** I wouldn't be as nice to Norman. Sanity lies in admitting your mistakes, and I have no qualms in admitting that although the book is about eighty percent accurate, there was some nasty stuff that I buried, and I did it out of love for Norman. If I had to do it over again, I'd reinstate that material, and not only for accuracy's sake.

**CB:** You said that you did the book because you were trying to answer a certain question.

**PM:** I had to find out why Norman had such a spell over me, which goes back to the question of Norman being an icon for a lot of people of my generation.

**CB:** Did you answer that question?

**PM:** I think so, though, short of five years' psychoanalysis, probably incompletely. I learned something about the awful mixture of being middle-class Jewish with a mother truly and blindly in love with you, being overwhelmingly ambitious, narcissistic, and lacking in conscience. The combination spells lawlessness. It may also spell greatness. But what it does mean, inevitably, is that at a certain point you start measuring yourself through the eyes of others; you become a victim of your reviews and the parties you're invited to, and, finally, achievement becomes an end in itself, justified by the risks you take—or, rather, the risks people see you as taking. And, you know, I would be a liar if I said that as a precocious college kid of seven-

teen, with certain axes of my own to grind, I was not fascinated by fame. But, for better or worse, I don't believe that I have that peculiar hollowness or emptiness at the core which, more rather than less, I'm now afraid Norman does have.

I would insist that you have to take historically important figures and put them in a particular cultural medium. Norman has been peculiarly rewarded. His career was saved by the sixties, since the sixties was a period of the "Me Generation." Now Norman has become a Yuppie. It's so bizarre. The seventies and the eighties have been very unkind to Norman because they sanctioned his worst instincts.

RE: When did you first meet Mailer?

PM: The summer of '58, before the stabbing. I went to Norman, hat in hand. I was seventeen. He was still living with Adele at what used to be the Waterfront Apartments, now the Kibbutz. I went to him as another *Naked and the Dead* fan, the fledgling writer. I remember being very nervous, and I remember him as being very solicitous. I had just finished my freshman year in college, and I was going to see the master, as it were.

RE: Your father is a painter. Did he know Mailer?

PM: Yes, through the normal flux of P-town parties. Back in those days, Provincetown had a lot more parties, a lot more wild, all-night parties, and I think people got to know each other more easily than nowadays.

RE: When I read Mailer, *His Life and Times*, I noticed that you and Mailer have similar outside interests. Who influenced whom? You both like fast cars, weapons . . .

PM: Wait, stop. Can we go one by one? Some years ago, Norman owned a Porsche that he managed to destroy in record time because he has no sympathy with machines. Have you ever seen Norman Mailer on a dance floor? That's how he drives a car, like he's manhandling an eighteen-wheeler on an interstate. As for guns, I don't know a thing about weapons, even though they fascinate me. My editor, Michael Korda, is a well-known gun nut, and the two of us will often put aside a manuscript to talk about Uzzis, but me—I don't own any guns.

RE: You had a pistol around at one point.

PM: Yeah, and I got rid of it. The downside of having a gun around is that you might use it. But here, too, your suggestion is off the wall. Norman, despite his publicity, stays far away from weapons.

RE: Let's talk about all this in terms of risk, then. Do you think it's appropriate to draw a comparison between Norman's involvement with boxing and your involvement with race car driving?

PM: Not at all. Norman likes blood; I don't, and it's a well-known fact in the racing world that I'm best described as a prudent driver.

RE: Did you ever consider yourself to be Norman's protégé?

PM: Sure.

RE: And did he regard you as a protégé?

PM: You'd have to ask him. The last thing I

want to do these days is to comment on how Norman Mailer regards Peter Manso. The important thing for me to recognize is that for many years I saw him as my mentor, which is why I'm so sad about our blow-up. False gods are dangerous. The discovery that one's hero is a fraud is among the most unbalancing experiences. It forces you to ask yourself how you could have been so stupid. The Norman of *Advertisements of Myself*, *American Dream*, or even *Armies of the Night* affected a lot of people, for this was the guy who, in the grayness and repression of the Eisenhower

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"The last thing I want to do these days is to comment on how Norman Mailer regards Peter Manso. The important thing for me to recognize is that for many years I saw him as my mentor, which is why I'm so sad about our blow-up. False gods are dangerous."

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years, vowed to become "consecutively more dangerous"; yet now he spends his time playing house nigger to wealthy East Side reactionaries, or reading about himself in *Liz Smith* and *People* magazine. Who are Mailer's friends? Not writers or painters, but the likes of Oscar de la Renta, Saul Steinberg, Donald Trump, and the like of Roy Cohn, who turned out to be Mailer's financial benefactor. Isn't that some index to our time, to the culture in which we now live? Lord, it is one of the disappointments of my life.

This is also the man who, as president of

PEN, unilaterally invited George Schultz to address that organization's international peace conference, while at the same time rejecting the rightful complaint that women were vastly under-represented on various panels. His response to such objections? "I didn't invite the Secretary of State here to be pussy whipped by a bunch of libbies." Norman is no progressive. Norman is no rebel. He's a student of fashion, which in better times was commonly known as an opportunist.

RE: Yet you admit that he was your role model.

PM: If each of us takes our education seriously, we have to admit our mistakes. Even more, we have to submit to their consequences. I no longer own a house in Provincetown, thanks to Norman, and God knows that what I have gone through with Mailer I could have lived without.

RE: How many times did it occur to you while you were doing the Mailer biography that it would destroy your relationship?

PM: Not enough times, obviously. It occurred to me, but there's this fiendish faculty called denial, and I suppose I simply couldn't imagine the possibility. That we were living under the same roof didn't help any either.

RE: Did you ever have conversations with Mailer about the possible threat to your friendship?

PM: At one point at the very beginning there was one of those conversations where things just sort of go by, but to say that Norman was opposed to the book would be preposterous. He was feeding me information and leads right and left, not to mention manuscript materials, letters, and photos. On the other hand, he had tried to prohibit me from seeing certain people, and I just said, "No way. I've got to see these people; they're central."

Overall, I was a fool, though. I became aware that every friendship Norman's had he's managed to destroy, and my hubris consisted of thinking I'd be different. What I find unforgivable is that Norman not only failed to recognize my love and seriousness in doing the book, but has sought to punish me for it.

RE: That's an attitude expressed by a lot of women who get involved with difficult men—that somehow they can be the woman who tames that man or who can live with that man knowing that they have a string of . . .

PM: Okay, call what happened a rotten divorce. Or say I was Norman Mailer's cocksucker. Go ahead, I dare you to print that.

RE: You'll become a folk hero. We'll even run it as a call out.

CB: I'd just like to say one thing on the subject of change. I see Mailer being relatively consistent, even though the subjects of his interest change. He's consistent in the way that he was exaggerated in his interest in psychopathology, and now he's exaggerated in his interest in power structures and people with social power.

PM: No, I will not let you make that assumption, because I don't see that. And I certainly  
(Continued on page 124)

# LETTER NUMBER 2

## FROM THE HAMPTONS

By B.H. Friedman

You asked about 627 Commercial Street, Mailer's present Provincetown house and a principal location for the forthcoming film *Tough Guys Don't Dance*, based on his novel. After spending sixteen of nineteen Cape summers there, some stretching deep into the fall, of course I remember the house well. You also asked about Mailer's fantasy concerning it. That's harder. I'll start with reality.

The property, on the bay at Commercial and Allerton, fronts about 115 feet, running shallowly lengthwise. The house and an adjoining garage were built during or soon after the First World War—about the time of the founding of the Art Association and the eastward expansion of the town as an art colony—by Dr. Percival C. Eaton, a wealthy Pittsburgh pediatrician interested in the arts and later active in the Association. Eaton didn't trust local contractors. He brought in his own and knew just what he wanted—a grand house—a Pittsburgh house, a house that had little to do with Provincetown. And he got it—perfectly winterized and initially slate-rooted and stucco faced—a house with a full basement and walls as thick as the Mellon Bank's. On the ground floor: a generous living room with a fireplace, an adjoining library and powder room, a comparatively large dining room—also with a fireplace, a kitchen, and a laundry/"mud room" with a shower and side entrance. On the second floor: five bedrooms and three baths. An attic, under the pitched roof, stretching the length of the house—just to the west, still part of the property—the garage. (To the east and on the inland side of Commercial Street, Eaton fixed up existing cottages, now separately owned, for his servants.) After Eaton's death, presumably during the Depression, the main house became the Collins Guest House—a warren of bedrooms, upstairs and down, including the attic. In the mid-fifties, after Lily Harmon's divorce from "the uranium king" and insatiable art collector Joseph Hirschhorn, she bought the property—restored it as a one-

family home, converted the garage to a guest house, and opened up the attic as a studio for herself. On the exterior of the house and garage she went beyond restoration. She covered the deteriorated stucco with red brick and surrounded the property's lawn with wrought-iron fences and gates. The entire place was now as impregnable as the basement.

Abby and I bought the property early in 1967, fully, very fully, furnished, with too many wooden pieces painted white and too much upholstery in pastel colors. For several seasons we lived with what we got, then began (but never finished) stripping more than adding. The slate roof gave the house so much additional weight (actually tons) that it boomed when the tide was high, slapping against the bulkhead. We replaced the slate with cedar shingles. Portions of the deck washed away every winter. We buried "dead men" (not Mailer's kind) under the deck and attached these huge sections of tree trunks to the deck with steel rods, tightly turn-buckled. We cleared out a potting room next to the dining room overlooking the deck and installed a section of the mahogany bar, thick underneath with chewing gum, from Boston's recently demolished Touraine Hotel. We thought about shingling the entire house and eliminating its neo-Georgian entrance but never got around to it. Harmon's guest cottage became my studio.

Thus, the property changed over some sixty-five years, and might have changed more, before Mailer's purchase. And thus, it contained ghosts from before World War I, ghosts from before Provincetown-as-art-colony, ghosts of Eaton's Pittsburgh, ghosts of tourists from all over, ghosts of Harmon's New Haven, ghosts of Abby's and my Manhattan. When we bought the property, Lily Harmon said the locals still referred to it as "old Dr. Eaton's place." When we lived there, they called it "the Ha'mon house." I suppose that when the Mailers moved in, people rang the bell ask-

ing for the Friedmans, and that eventually, when the Mailers move out, only then, will it become "the Mailer house" or maybe "the place where *Tough Guys* was shot."

Ghosts! But nothing as spooky or fantastic as what Mailer himself created by living on the property jointly with Peter Manso and Roy Cohn. Manso, the hanger-on and oral biographer of Mailer. Cohn—what?—the hanger-in, despite disgraced celebrity during the McCarthy hearings and subsequent indictments, disbarment, and finally, fatally, AIDS. Such a triangular marriage of creativity, idolatry, and politics was doomed. I was relieved to hear that at least Cohn was a short distance away from the others—in my former studio, restored and enlarged. But what about the Mailers and the Mansos? How had they split the main house? Vertically? Horizontally? No, I heard, they shared everything from the basement to the attic, except for separate refrigerators. After reading *Tough Guys*, I wondered whose dismembered body would end up in whose refrigerator.

I return to Mailer's novel, watching his pot boil as I flip through its pages, looking for the house I remember. Early on, Tim Madden, the central tough guy, a hard-boiled writer, sitting alone in a bar, "divines" that Jessica Pond is "drawn to substantial property. Fine mansions on good green lawns with high wrought-iron gates . . ." A page later he is telling her "about the most imposing house our town can point to . . . fenced about in high wrought-iron." Later, Madden goes to his "*querencia*, that study on the third floor where [he] used to work looking out on the bay. . ."

The house is furnished much more fully with scraps of history, sociology, psychology, philosophy, and mysticism than with furniture and furnishings. No macho writer like Madden would be interested in the latter. So, of course, "Most of the furniture had been chosen by Patty [the wife who has left him] and her taste was flouncy and full of Tampa Beach money—that is, white furniture and



A HOUSE WITH HISTORY

Photo: Marian Rotz

splashy hues in the cushions and the draperies and the throw rugs, loads of flowers on the fabrics, many barstools in puffy leatherette—pink, lemon-lime, orange and ivory for her boudoir and her drawing room. . . "I'm happy that Abby didn't abandon our plain Thonet barstools—they would have struck a flat puffless note.

Halfway through *Tough Guys*, Madden talks to Jessica "for a long time about property values in Provincetown" (seemingly as

popular a subject there now as in the Hamptons): ". . . frontage, I told them, was the factor. We had one hundred feet of bay frontage, and the length of our house ran parallel to the shore, rare in our town." And following the novel there's a disclaimer, beginning, "While Provincetown is a real place, and is most certainly located on Cape Cod, a few names and places have been changed and a couple of houses invented. . ."

Well, by the end, after half a dozen murders,

including decapitations of two women, after many scenes of sexual violence, both homosexual and heterosexual, after the consumption of enormous quantities of alcohol and drugs, I want to trust Mailer's powers of invention. And, surrounded by the natural uninvented Edenic innocence of the Hamptons, I can't wait to see his (my) home movie. *B. H. Friedman, a former summer resident of Provincetown, is a novelist, playwright and biographer.*

# TOUGH LADY



Photo: Marian Roth

## *A Conversation with Pat de Groot*

*Edited by Christopher Busa*

**Pat de Groot:** I was born in London, England. My father was English, my mother American. They were divorced when I was six. When I was ten, at the onset of World War II, I was sent to live in New Jersey, with my uncle. In about three months, I made myself over into an American kid. I spent time in Arizona, where I worked on a ranch with cows and horses. I was outside all the time I wasn't sleeping, and that appealed to me then in the same way it does now. I went to college at Pembroke for two years, and then graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a B.A. in English and Journalism, in 1953. I didn't like either of those cities. In college, I spent a lot of time, during winter and spring, on Mt. Washington and around that area, as skier and part-time ski bum. In the summer, I came to Provincetown.

**Provincetown Arts:** We suspect that childhood adversity is a common phenomenon in the lives of artists.

**PdG:** Trouble drives you into yourself. The bad times are often more productive than the good times.

**PA:** You first came to Provincetown as a teenager when your parents rented the Dos Passos house in the east end. Did you have any awareness then of the writers and painters around you?

**PdG:** I wasn't particularly connected with the art colony. I was connected to the place physically. I was more into feeling the world through the bottom of my feet—the flats, the sky, the dunes, and the color. All that turned me on. I even made some timid attempts at painting then, but I didn't have artist friends or any notion that I could take that route to

find myself. I did work in the Provincetown bookstore when I was sixteen. I did nothing but read. They fired me. I spent time offshore with Charlie Mayo on his tuna fishing boat. Later, Nanno worked for Charlie when he wasn't painting.

**PA:** After college, how did you survive?

**PdG:** Well, I had an idea I wanted to go to Taos and somehow learn to paint. I had a friend there. My parents were so horrified by my hooking up with that individual that they talked me into going to Paris. I got work with *The Paris Review*. They were then on their third issue, and they needed help in the office. I lived in a tiny room with a sterno set up on a tin trunk for a kitchen. I met the writers who were there in the early Fifties. I was not very hip and was hideously shy, so I wasn't around as much as I could have been.

I did get into Samuel Beckett's work. I had read *Molloy*. At the time, a ten-page excerpt, including the "sucking stones" section, was being put together for issue number five. I had to type it. For ten pages, in one paragraph, he moves these stones in and out of his pockets and his mouth, working on a complicated logistic with the order of sucking each stone and where to put it after it is sucked so it won't get sucked again before all sixteen stones have, in turn, been sucked and put in the proper pocket. It took me a long time because I constantly got lost. I read and read this piece. Those stones stay with me and somehow influence my work.

**PA:** And when you came back?

**PdG:** I got a job with Farrar, Straus in New York. I started in the production department. I took a course at N.Y.U. from Marshall Lee, in book design. He was a real innovator in that field. He took apprentices in his design office at H. Wolff Book Manufacturing Company. I applied for the job and spent the next three years learning everything about book production from the ground up. I worked for most of the major New York book publishers through that office, so when I left, it was not hard to get freelance work. I learned design from Marshall. He was a good teacher. This was the only formal training I had.

**PA:** When did you meet your future husband, artist Nanno de Groot?

**PdG:** I met him briefly when I was eighteen, because he and Elise Asher lived next door to the Pinkerson's, where I spent a lot of time talking to Alan Pinkerson. I met him seriously in June 1956. I was visiting Ian. She told him I was here, and the next morning when I woke up he was sitting on top of a weir pole, on his feet like a bird looking out to sea, waiting for me to get up and get him coffee. We spent that week together. I went back to work in New York. I came up to see him almost every weekend. Late in the fall, we started living together in a small farmhouse in Little York, New Jersey. I commuted to work. He painted.

**PA:** He was forty-three and you were twenty-six: the classic moment for the older man, younger woman.

**PdG:** Nanno was ready for a young woman. In his words, he needed someone to feed on. Someone to turn him on. He didn't play around, but he did change ladies every seven years. That seemed necessary, to keep him painting. One time he married a gay lady by mistake. That lasted six months. He loved women. I was his fourth wife.

**PA:** How did you come to build such a large house on the bay in Provincetown?

**PdG:** We spent five summers on Race Road in Mary Cecil Allen's cabin. Every year Nanno had a show at the H.C.E. Gallery. Together, he and Ivan Karp sold as many as twenty-six paintings in a summer. There was a scene, a lot of people, no money—but life was good. The cabin was a tiny space where Nanno managed to do most of his year's work. He needed a new studio, and we wanted to live here. In 1961, he sold some paintings to



GRAVE SCULPTURE FOR HUSBAND NANNO de GROOT

Joseph Hirshhorn. This land came on the market, and we bought it for \$6,000. It was an open beach. In the winter, we discarded the plans architect friends had drawn up for us. Nanno made a rough sketch with a 6B pencil, which was the beginning. I took a sharp pencil and used what I had learned from the architect's drawings to design this house. It is probably so big because we had never looked at houses, and we couldn't figure out how to make it smaller.

**PA:** You and he enjoyed the house for too short a time.

**PdG:** We had very little time here, yes. Thanksgiving 1962, we moved in. Then Nanno got sick, we had to go to N.Y.C. to get him treated, and I rented a place there. We came back in May. He made thirty paintings that summer. It was a very magical time in this house, too good to be true. He got sick again in September. That Thanksgiving weekend, J.F.K. got shot, and there was a terrible storm that went through three high tides. It took the bulkhead, the deck, and almost undermined the house. Christmas, he died. He is buried in the Provincetown cemetery. I carved a gravestone for him; it's a dancing lady.

**PA:** A good thing to dance on the grave of an artist.

**PdG:** I had an idea that an artist is supposed to have something real on his grave. A couple of people pushed me to mark the place so they could find it. I had been making pencil drawings at the time. Originally, I had planned a phallic form, but when I got the slab of marble in the house, that seemed all wrong. I sat down one morning, and the present female figure just came out. I drew it to size and started chopping that day. Conrad Malicoat loaned me a lump hammer and a point, and he made me a stand so I could work facing the piece at my own height. I had never used tools before, but I had no problems carving it. I worked on it for three months in 1969. The piece was an extension of myself. Nanno would be pleased to have a dancing lady on his grave. Particularly me. Maybe I would have continued carving if graveyard commissions had come my way. Instead, I went back to drawing.

**PA:** Nanno was the great love of your life. You must have had an extraordinary mourning period.

**PdG:** Yes. I freaked. I stayed freaked. I went west and skied. Visited with my writer friends. I worked to pay some debts. After maybe nine months, with the help of some new friends, I got launched into a second adolescence. I studied Zen Buddhism, I became deeply involved with jazz music, with the Black world of New York, and I explored psychedelic drugs. I spent a lot of time trying to figure out what art is about.

**PA:** Did you listen to jazz at the A-House in those days?

**PdG:** Reggie had live jazz in the summer. There was a big table in the middle of the room, and we were there every night. Reggie had a wonderful collection of paintings hanging on the wall, too. Bob Thompson, Salina,

Gandy Brody, et al. In 1965, Bob painted here during the summer in the big studio. Gandy lived in the back room and painted mostly on the deck. Nina Simone played a gig in the Carriage Room for Reggie, and later Bob and Gandy brought her to the studio and Bob made some portraits of her. There was a lot happening.

**PA:** What made you start drawing?

**PdG:** Part of me always wanted to be an artist, but it was much easier for me to do it vicariously through Nanno. After watching Nanno paint, I couldn't paint. I was too close to the way he did it, and I had a long way to go to break away from graphic design. I needed to get used to working with a thing in my hand. I started doing doodle drawing with a rapidograph. Nanno had used the squeegee top of the Higgins India ink bottle, so I used that when I started drawing sea gulls in 1966. After that, I experimented with color, and I made some paintings. This work was very graphic—hard edged. I felt I was still attached to a book jacket state of mind. And what I did was always interrupted by having to go back to work in N.Y.C., seven or eight months in the winter, where I lived in a small place for \$26 a month. It wasn't until 1974 that I really got into doing some serious drawing. Paul Yakovenko had left a bamboo stick in the studio. I picked that up and started drawing birds and water.

**PA:** You have been faithful to that short, stubby stick for many years.

**PdG:** It's a good implement for what I'm doing. I sharpen it myself. I push at the paper with it. It is crude and clumsy, which adds to the accident aspect of the line. If I am on, the stick will do anything I want it to do. If not, I get hideous, awful stuff. I never could deal with the brush; it's too soft. There's a resistance to a stick that I like.

**PA:** Do you still design books?

**PdG:** No. In 1974, my mother died, and I inherited a little money. I stopped designing book jackets. It's not that I didn't like doing them. I did, and I could get plenty of work by then and do it here. I felt that the format  $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$  inches, three-color separations, and



PdG AT WORK ON HER DECK

Photo: Tina Dickey

somebody always on the phone asking for something I hadn't done, bound me up. After fifteen years of doing this thing, I had to break away from it, extract my mind from a tight place. My friend Myron Stout warned me about changing my profession in mid-life, but I paid no attention. Instead, I began drawing full-time—sea gulls and water, on sand-colored paper, 20 x 26 inches. I made hundreds of drawings without thinking of selling them. I worked at a table on the deck outside my studio all winter. In the summer, I went to the sea gull rookery at Long Point in my kayak and drew more sea gulls.

**PA:** Your bird drawings have a Japanese quality. Did you study Zen ink drawing and calligraphy?

**PdG:** When I started to draw I had no real background in art. I was studying Zen Buddhism. It was this teaching I used to learn to draw, and this way of drawing became a practice, like meditation. The teaching was a guide

for weeding out the bullshit in my mind and in my work. I do look at Japanese ink drawing, but my work looks Oriental because I've put my mind in an Oriental place, and what comes out is a Western off-shoot of that thinking; like what the Black people did with Christianity.

**PA:** You draw from the kayak.

**PdG:** The kayak functions as an uncomfortable chair I sit in to draw the cormorants at the breakwater. It has a backrest and a dry space for paper. I can lift it on and off the deck. It is convenient because I can maneuver around quietly. I only use it for drawing in the fall—August, September, and October. I can work six hours at a stretch. The wind and the sun and the sea can be a problem, and sitting there with my legs stuck out in front of me is also difficult, but this is the one way I can get close enough to the birds to really see them. A big advantage is six hours of uninterrupted work. There are other times when I do

get to enjoy the kayak, though.

**PA:** When you play the drums—we recall hearing them beat across the bay a half a mile away some August afternoons when the wind carries the sound from your deck to our ears, hauntingly—do you use your hands in a way similar to drawing?

**PdG:** I have to get into a juxtaposition with myself so that my hands can play the drums and I won't stop them. It is the same with drawing. My hand has to make the drawing, and I have to find out how not to stop it. I keep working until the rhythm or line starts to happen, and my hand is there and somehow the energy must come through without interference from this thing on my shoulders. Skiing fast through good snow, making tracks in the early morning—that is a similar thing.

**PA:** Your hands are covered with hard skin from paddling. Your muscles are toned, your face is weathered. You have studied Tai Chi for eight years, and you have a black belt in kemp-karate. Do you regard yourself as a role model for the independent woman making her way in the world?

**PdG:** No. All this is just my way of surviving.

**PA:** Do you consider yourself to be tough?

**PdG:** No. Only externally. When I'm not focussed on my work, I tend to disintegrate. Staying physically strong is something to do in between bouts of drawing. I live under the illusion that if I don't stay strong, I'll disintegrate.

**PA:** How did you get into karate?

**PdG:** At the time, I desperately wanted to hook up with a music teacher. I had no interest whatsoever in the martial arts. But in Provincetown you haven't much choice. Norman Armstrong came to town, and he convinced me I should study his art. He was such an incredible teacher and practitioner it didn't matter what he taught; you might as well study it. In the beginning, it was a way of getting in shape. Later, it became another big thing in my life. It was a long, arduous trip to a black belt.

**PA:** We once heard a drill sergeant address his troops, saying, "Now you know just enough to get your ass kicked in an alley."

**PdG:** I'm a runner.

**PA:** Where do you locate and confront your fear?

**PdG:** Any concern about what the line will look like is fear. Any judgement of what you are doing as you do it is fear. Fear makes the line and the drawing impotent. The same situation is true playing the drums in a band. What you know gets you working, but then you have to let go and work beyond what you know for something to happen. The edge people talk about is somewhere in between. If you go too far, you lose it. If you don't go far enough you never find it. In the martial arts you fear getting hurt. You practice speed and technique until your confrontations with fear get more and more sophisticated. In Tai Chi, you let your opponent attack you, and just before impact you turn so that his force lands on nothing; then with a small push you can use his momentum to send him flying. I think that in all these situations technique is how you converse with fear. But to confront fear is a time-stopping situation.

**PA:** In your drawing, the line is the occasion for you to delineate your fear. The line itself is the edge.

**PdG:** Well, the bird is the line. The line translates my excitement about how it is out there, what is happening with a bird in the air or with a mating pair in the water. There is a lot going on. I mimick the action of the water and the birds moving with the water. It's almost like tracing. And often I do this looking through binoculars.

**PA:** In your more recent drawings, you are putting the birds on water, depicting water. Do you think you will ever graduate to water without birds?

**PdG:** I've tried that. It's very upsetting to draw moving, choppy water. As long as there is a bird on the water, I can handle it.

**PA:** In the painting of Nanno de Groot, what interests us is the way his forms were set within a field of tension. For example, a red sail would be jellied in a sea of white, vibrating like gelatin congealing from a liquid state. The edges are held in a kind of tension that you can see.

**PdG:** I'm looking for a loose and easy line. When I first began to draw, it was terrifying. I knew I couldn't really draw, but I decided to draw. I made thousands of drawings. It was like beating your own head against a wall until you get through the wall. I still find my early drawings interesting, even when I didn't have any idea how to draw a bird, when the legs were a line with a knob on it. It took a long time, but my hand learned. The hand learns.

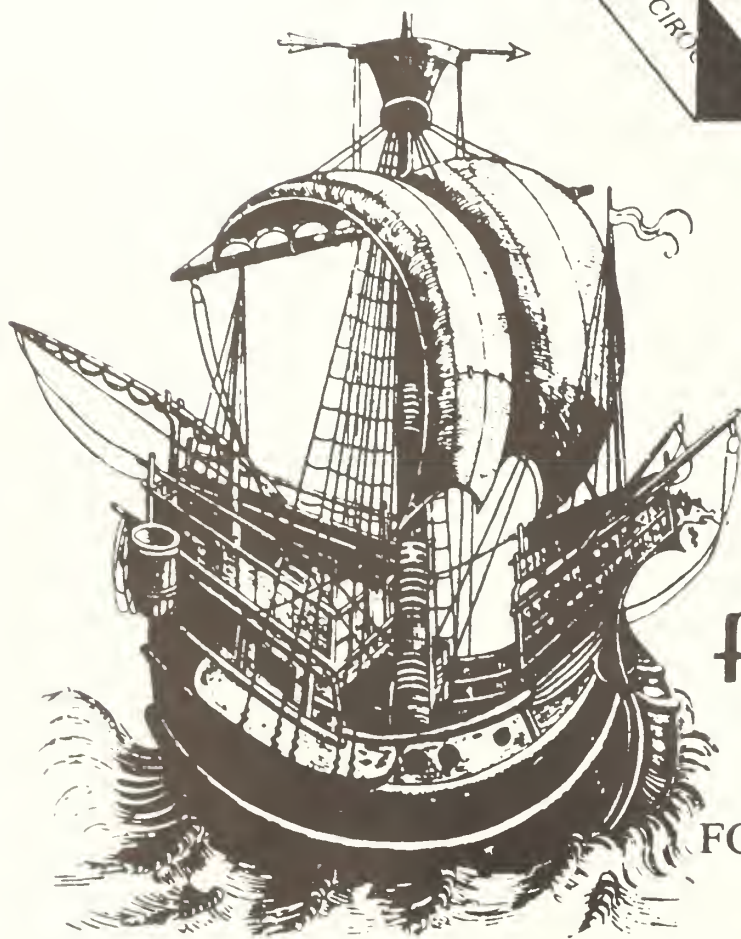
**PA:** Few women have both made art and lived as strongly in nature as you have. Do you see yourself as a Georgia O'Keeffe of the Outer Cape?

**PdG:** I think it is very dangerous to think of yourself as anything you are not already. I don't like this female independent thing. Living alone is horrible, but I don't think it's any better living with someone you shouldn't be living with. I feel very cut off. Come April, after a winter alone, I almost feel I don't exist. I barely know what's going on, unless I haul myself to New York for a little while and look around. But then you lose weeks you could be working.

**PA:** When you exhibit your work, you often do large installations of many drawings, an entire wall of drawings massed together.

**PdG:** I'm not so interested in the single drawing as what can happen with many drawings. They fit together in the order I draw them, with the omission of the ones I destroy. On the wall they make a large body of work that has a rhythm all its own. Repetition attracts me. Last year, at my exhibition at the Group Gallery, the wall with 120 cormorant drawings read from a distance like hieroglyphics. I like that. I want my work to have the look of writing on the wall. There is a bird intimacy I'm looking for, a weirdness, an archaic peculiarity they have that is recognizable; not just recognizable, but familiar.

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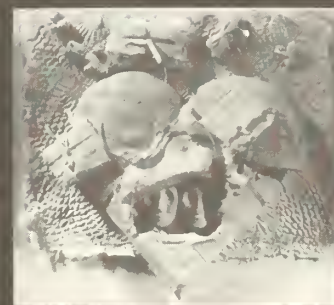
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photo: Kelsey Kennard

# E A R T H

*By Eleanor Munro*

The Cape is a geographical oddity—this north-south arm so knottily flexed that when I travel its interior sideroads, try as I may to keep my bearings, I always end up facing a direction I hadn't anticipated. For example, on late autumn afternoons as I walk home along South Pamet Road after checking out Ballston Beach, I naturally look for the sunset across Mooney's bull pasture, for I take it on faith, since our own house is placed at approximately the same angle as Mooney's, that that way is west. Yet the road bends me until, willy-nilly, I find myself looking off across the Mooney tomato-patch side of the road, toward a ruddy glow atop the pinewoods by young Arty Joseph's place. After some years, I've learned to take a contrary pleasure in that kind of confounding meander, letting my feet take me back and forth between amiable bulls and neighbors until I'm delivered to the top of our own driveway, headed at last indisputably due west, certain beyond doubt that I'll find the kitchen window full of beckoning color.

I'm not alone in liking to feel located at the end of a trip. The quest for self-orientation is an ancient and universal human one, perhaps bred into the brain, as some psychologists argue. It was in pursuit of further understanding of that need that my sister—the sculptor Elisabeth Munro Smith—and I set off last summer on a 3,200 mile drive through the Southwest, to visit five earthworks, those monumental structures, part-sculpture, part-architecture, built by contemporary artists for the specific function of orienting mind and body in space and also in time.

The works are enormous in scale and styleless in appearance, without ornament, color, or imagery. Most significant, they are oriented to features in the sky or on the horizon, the cardinal points, the points of solstices or equinoxes, the North Star, and so forth. In these ways, they echo structures built by early people in many northern latitudes, from Stonehenge in Britain to the Big Horn Medicine Wheel in Wyoming. Like stone circles, like religious shrines and temples around the world, earthworks answer that

fundamental human need: for stability in the earth-centered space that is our home in the open universe—and for a sense of integration into it.

In the shadow of an earthwork, the traveler reflects not so much on the work itself as on the coherence and endurance of the universe. If the religious shrine gives pilgrims a foretaste of heaven, the earthwork affords secular pilgrims a feel for the continuum that stretches from the ground underfoot to the furthest reach of human vision and imagination. In the end, the earth-artist can be said to give eyes and thought to the globe itself. That suggestion parallels what some scientists call the Gaia Principle: that human beings and their works are the cells of a global organism afloat in the cosmos.

One of the simplest and most evocative of these works is "Sun Tunnels," by Nancy Holt. It consists of four enormous concrete pipes laid down on sunbaked Utah ground in an open crisscross oriented to the the points of summer and winter solstice sunrises. Rambling cattle, wild horses, and rattlesnakes are

its companions. In winter winds and summer heat, silently it performs its task of tying this point on the plane of earth into the solar geometry.

The pipes are pierced by configurations of holes that mirror the constellations turning overhead, so that all day long bright disks of sunlight glide across the curved inner walls of the pipes, as if in response to the immemorial dream of living among stars.

Other earthworks lie in Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, and elsewhere. "Star Axis," by Charles Ross, for example, is a work under construction on a mesa where the Sangre de Cristo mountains of New Mexico meet the easterly-lying plains. When the work is finished, it will consist of a huge sighting pipe carved into the side of the mesa, fixed on the absolute due north of the earth's axis.

Through the ages, an ever-changing series of stars has cycled close to the theoretical North Pole; in turn, each has been called the "North Star." Such, for us, is Polaris; such, for the pyramid builders of Egypt, was the star Thuban; such was and will be Vega. In time, Polaris will move off into space on an ever-enlarging spiral, only to return to its present site in remote time. This cycling of the polar stars as seen from earth repeats itself in a period astronomers estimate at about 26,000 years.

"Star Axis" reaches out into the heavens, in theory, to encompass such magnificent

slow ages of celestial rotation and return. When the work is complete, stone stairs will lead travelers up through the sighting tunnel toward the oculus. With each rising step, the oculus will appear to widen. The artist has calibrated the stairs' height so that the disk of sky seen from each level will show Polaris's enlarged orbit at a fixed future age. Meanwhile, atop the mesa, a triangular tower will cast a widening and shrinking wing-shaped shadow as the sun travels between solstices. So the work that is a giant telescope is also a time-projecting sundial of massive dimension.

We traveled other lonely trails, visiting Walter de Maria's "Lightning Field," a grid of 400 twenty-foot-tall steel poles in an eerily beautiful prairie some eleven miles east of the Continental Divide, in Arizona. The structure lies directly in the path of seasonal electric storms and serves as a connective system between the energized sky and the ground. Distantly visible through the grid is a range of sawtooth mountains, and the poles themselves constantly appear to shift in alignment and illumination as one walks around and among them. In calm weather, the prairie is so open and bathed in changing sunlight and starshine that a stay is a blessing. Through the poles, we watched the far mountains catch red in the sunset. A butte to the south darkened and gathered storm clouds that did not move. Four horses grazed between the steel fingers.

As the sun sank, the tips of the poles gleamed, then disappeared from view.

Morning there was pure grace. Light breezes stirred fronds of grass still silver with dew. On the cabin porch, two ancient chairs—hammered together in some forgotten functional style, now grayed, with rusted bolts, sagging seats, and crazy legs—that the evening before had looked like a pair of woeful abandoned homesteaders, now looked fresh for another eternity of pole-watching.

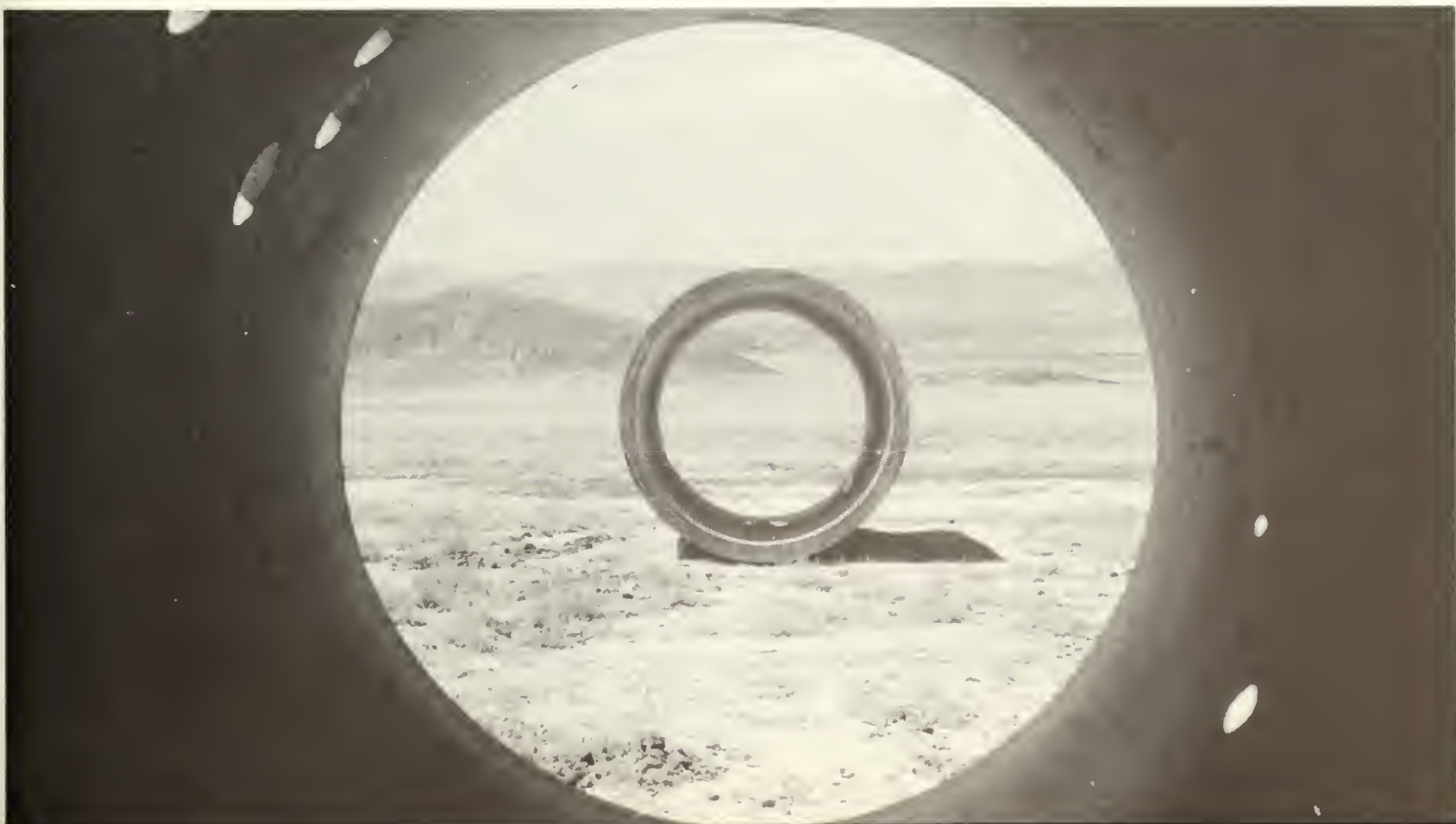
To reach Michael Heizer's "Double Negative" in the southeastern corner of Nevada, we descended the majestic Humboldt River valley, listening to a recorded reading on our tapedeck of "Moby Dick." As our little car plowed down the wide earth seas, Melville's words mixed in our minds with earthworks seen and astronomical ideas received, and slowly the tale itself widened to engage the heavens. Ahab, it struck us, was of course the North Star, high on the deck on his ivory leg. The white whale was the antipodal death star, Canopus. For the war between the Poles is fought every year in the southern seas, when the winter sun skins toward the solstice. And who were we, then—Ishmael, who survived the war?

The character of Michael Heizer's work is implicit in its title, for it is the product of a conflict of another order, this one between the mind and recalcitrant matter. It is an emptiness—or negativity—twice repeated: a

# W O R K S

SUN TUNNELS

Photo Elisabeth Munro Smith





Lightning Field

Photo Elisabeth Munro Smith

trench 1,500 feet long and fifty feet deep, cut at right angles across both flanks of a deep natural gorge. To make his mark on the earth, one man's gesture of collaboration with and domination over dumb nature, the artist had to excavate and shift 240,000 tons of sandstone and earth.

Our last visit was to the "Roden Crater," an extinct volcano some thirty miles northeast of Flagstaff, one of 200 or so pumice hills of the region. In this ghostly dome, through and around the metallic cinder cone that is the internal, fossilized conduit of its former fire, the artist James Turrell plans to build angled tunnels with elbow turns and chambers leading to apertures in the crater top. Light from lunar, planetary, and celestial events will enter the apertures, gather, refract, and self-enhance in the utter darkness, and be ex-

perienced by visitors as luminous presences, not quite space nor exactly light, but rather illusions of both.

Driving our last lap back eastward toward Albuquerque, the clear weather that had eased our trip broke. The sky turned black and blue. Behind the mountains to the south, doubtless, the "Lightning Field," was working full blast. Ahead, cloud towers let down rain in floating veils. Then suddenly, up in the turbulent sky, we saw a vision: not quite place or exactly light but an illusion of both, created by the sun as it sank at our backs, sending beams to be refracted in the clouds before us.

All the way to Albuquerque, that cloud of light led us, and when we entered the city, the light was there, and we drove into it. In the heart of the light there was blowing spray that struck our windshield and windows from all

sides at once like a cosmic carwash, and looking out through the walls, we saw a rainbow visible in its entire curve from horizon to horizon. We took it for a good augury and an admirable work of art by the earth.

The last time I'd seen such a marvel was from the Provincetown beach, facing what I thought was west but turned out to be south. It didn't matter. Under a rainbow, no one feels lost.

*This piece is excerpted and adapted from ones Eleanor Munro published this winter in the New York Times and the Christian Science Monitor. Her most recent book is On Glory Roads: A Pilgrim's Book About Pilgrimages. Thames & Hudson, New York.*

# SUSAN LYMAN

*We feel, or think we feel, nearest to a tree's "essence" when it chances to stand like us, in isolation; but evolution did not intend trees to grow singly. Far more than ourselves they are social creatures, and no more natural as isolated specimens than man is a marooned sailor or a hermit. Their society in turn creates or supports other societies of plants, insects, birds, mammals, micro-organisms; all of which we may choose to isolate, section off, but which remain no less the ideal entity, or whole experience, of the wood—and indeed are still so seen by most of primitive mankind."*

—John Fowles, *The Trees*



STRANGE PLANTS. 1985

As a sculptor I've pursued drawing as a regular studio activity since my fellowship at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown in 1981-82. I was fascinated then by the flexibility many of the painters gained through using drawing as a means of resolving their

ideas. I turned to drawing in order to "free" my sculpture and to experience and undertake change in my work.

The particular group of "tree" sculptures I've been building since late 1984 have their genesis in a series of drawings initiated by a collaboration proposed by artist and friend Margaret Prentice. In spring 1984 I began the collaboration by drawing the potential for pairing ideas. This notion manifested itself in side-by-side, intertwined, attenuated structures at once figural, natural, and architectural. The gestural forms spiralled upwards in cyclonic form, suggesting the frenzy of dancing or mating pairs. In some drawings, the figures moved in and out of an implied natural or manmade landscape space. I was trying to join natural and manmade form into one unified vision. The drawing process was vigorous; I arrived at the images with as much erasing as layering.

That summer, Margaret and I met at Haystack School on Deer Isle, Maine. Without an exact plan for collaboration, we found our primary clues from the immediate environment on the island. We were in the midst of a dense but fragile spruce woods, a forest primeval on a bed of granite. In places, barely six feet of soil held the spruce roots of one-hundred-year-old trees in place. Exposed roots of trees felled in winter storms gestured toward the sky. A spruce hit by lightning years ago had split and sent separate but parallel trunks upward like an inverted figure with legs in air. The woods were filled with animated figures, their "limbs" outstretched, competing for sunlight and gesturing toward each other.

The spirited, anthropomorphic gestures of the weathered spruce branches we gathered inspired a birdlike figure, "Icarus." The simple construction supported additional winglike structures of reed and painted cast paper elements, materials brought to the collaboration from our previous work. Perched on three feet, with wings outstretched, "Icarus" leaned upward, tentatively, as if he might fly.

Back on the Cape, I recalled a particular plot of land overgrown with mature bittersweet vine, and secured permission from the owner to prune it back. My starting point was the anthropomorphic gesture implied by the vine in relationship to its natural setting—the vines embracing, clutching, even repelling themselves, trees, fences, and other machine-age debris scattered about. This was a special place. It was easy to empathize with the vines; to construe their relationships to adjacent natural and manmade forms as metaphors for human relationships.

Back in the studio, I whittled away the bark and dried the materials, looking for the hidden potential for expression in each cutting. Then I just started assembling vines together without any preconceived idea or form in mind, other than a notion of preserving in some way the interrelationships apparent in nature that I had experienced in the wood.

The building process in these sculptures is as organic as the branches and vines, involving considerable tearing down and reconstruc-

tion of the linear elements. The sculpture evolves spontaneously and seems akin to Paul Klee's definition of drawing as "taking a line for a walk." Emotions are layered on the sculpture as the work progresses. I stop adding more "lines" when I feel I've identified the gesture, emotion, or implied sense of body.



The sculptures shift in their configuration intentionally. Some views embody a figural presence, though its identity may be difficult to name. Others reveal an actual pairing of forms, as in "People Look Ridiculous When They're in Ecstasy." Treelike forms embrace, contain, or imitate a body or gesture. Descriptive words that frequently come to mind are assertive, strong, graceful, whimsical, and, at once, vulnerable, fragile, apprehensive, awkward—words that would describe a tree, a friend, a lover, a living thing.

From the start I'm imposing an artificial structure on natural form and materials. I join similar and dissimilar plant materials in both natural and unnatural ways. (Recently I've introduced small hardwood trees and branches as strong vertical counterpoints to the twisting, delicate vines.) There are discretely mitered joints that at first might appear convincingly natural. On the other hand, a wild corkscrew turn in a vine appears unnatural as if manipulated or controlled. The viewer might ask to what degree these materials have been manipulated, if at all. Do these forms occur in nature? Keen observation might lead the viewer to an intensified awareness of his own day-to-day relationship to his natural and manmade environment. Man shapes nature, is, in turn, shaped by it, and, I hope, respects his place in it.

# BERT & CYNTHIA:



LEANING GROVE 1977

*Bert Yarborough received a Bachelor of Architecture degree from Clemson University in 1969. His MA and MFA in photography came from the University of Iowa. In 1976, he came to Provincetown as a fellow of the Fine Arts Work Center. In 1979, he was appointed Chairman of the Visual Committee—a post he held for four years. In 1984, he was awarded a Fulbright grant in sculpture to Nigeria. He and his wife, Cynthia Huntington, moved to Southern California in 1985.*

*Cynthia Huntington came to Provincetown as a fellow in writing in 1978. She graduated from Michigan State University and the Bread Loaf English School, Middlebury College, and is the author of one book of poems, *The Fish-Wife*, published by the University of Hawaii Press. She is presently assistant professor of English at the University of California, Irvine, where she teaches in the graduate program in writing.*

**Cynthia Huntington:** The first piece of yours I saw, called "Bog Web," was a structure of pine branches placed across and intertwined with a stand of pines near a cranberry bog in the dunes. It was overhead, high up in the trees, linking them, and forming a light canopy. I remember I didn't see it at first when you took me to the site; you had to point up, and then there it was. It was very subtle. Back then you seemed to place a lot of emphasis on how the piece was viewed; you took people out there, asked them to walk out in silence, to feel the atmosphere of the dunes first of all. Was this an attempt to connect the viewer with how the piece was built, with your process, so that they could come to the structure in a special frame of mind?

**Bert Yarborough:** Looking back on it now I think it was a real arrogance on my part. I wanted people to experience the dunes environment the same way I did, gathering many long fallen-down pine trees, carrying them through the woods, listening to the silence of the dunes, the transitions between

the forests and the dunes and then back into the bogs where this particular piece of work was. I hoped at the time to get everybody quieted down so that when they came into this place, where you couldn't perceive anything immediately, they might be able to feel the structure above them.

**CH:** Wasn't there something mystical about your work, your approach at the time? I always felt you were involved with landscape, and your conception of the artist's relation to nature.

**BY:** I thought so, I felt so, and I wanted it to be so, but I don't think it necessarily was. The Outer Cape landscape gave me a great sense of peace, and I enjoyed being in it. I really did revere it; I still do.

**CH:** How many of the people you took to the "Bog Web" truly saw the piece?

**BY:** I would say fewer than half really saw it, really felt it, because it was pretty subtle—some people said too subtle. I still feel it was one of the best pieces I did utilizing materials that I found out on the dunes.

**CH:** How about "Leaning Grove," which you did earlier?

**BY:** I considered it the first major work with natural materials that I did out there, outside of several studies with sticks and small structures. The grove was an attempt to execute a work and stay with it for a long time, to see how the environment changed and to see if it changed the environment. I used it as a springboard to execute drawings and to think about other work; but mainly it was an attempt to slow down, not try to execute a lot of stuff, to stay with one piece, observe it, and see what I could learn. I got heavily into dune research at the time: the history of the dunes, the history of the forestation processes, how groves and spaces in the dunes could be formed. It was my attempt at investigating as well as at executing a piece of work.

**CH:** Did you think of those pieces as putting a deliberate, human mark on the landscape, or did you want to be unobtrusive, as though

the landscape had created each piece?

**BY:** I always tried to be as harmonious as possible, and I thought that the greatest harmony was achieved when the pieces were almost invisible, which is rather ironic. This changed as I moved away from utilizing natural materials and started to work with basket reed and sticks, creating different types of structures. At first I felt that the reed was a compatible material in that environment, that it could be taken for something natural there, even though people would recognize it as having been constructed. I was actually trying to identify or to think about the whole animal nature of myself in an environment like that, especially spending the majority of my time out there, trying to respond to those instincts or impulses through the making of a structure—

**CH:** —a shelter?

**BY:** A shelter, or a nest, or a structure that could be interpreted as being related to that environment in a kind of animal way. Something that belonged yet, at the same time, didn't belong.

**CH:** You don't think the reed was successful, then?

**BY:** My favorite piece was "Secret," which I worked on the second summer we lived in Euphoria. (Thank God for that dune shack and its owner Hazel Werner!) That piece, as its title suggests, was the most secretive and the most difficult to get to. I think it truly fit its surroundings.

**CH:** Given that the pieces were so difficult to get to, hidden out in the dunes, what kinds of problems did you encounter in documenting the work?

**BY:** It was difficult because you could never simply photograph a piece the way it was; you could never experience the environment the way it was. And so I became more and more frustrated with the whole process of documentation. I photographed under every conceivable condition, exhausted the photograph, and was never satisfied. I was still learning

what working out there meant and trying to communicate as much as possible for a viewer in a gallery.

**CH:** I have always wondered: For whom is your work intended?

**BY:** In Provincetown it was for a very very small, select group, predominantly people at the Work Center and a few others who heard about it and were interested in going out to the dunes—or for those who were out in the dunes and stumbled upon my work.

**CH:** That raises a question about the intention of any art that has, necessarily, such a small audience. If you compare the work to an animal's nest, or web, there is a difference, because the animal's intention is practical, and whatever we see in it is secondary. But yours aren't real shelters—they seem more ritualistic. Who, then, is the ritual for, what audience participates, or what is actually being enacted? There seems to be a contradiction. Or did you have some sense that, just by being there, the pieces accomplished some function, just by their presence—some function not just purely private?

**BY:** I think you're right in a certain sense, that they were private art, and that I was really investigating myself and my attitudes and simply trying to learn what I was doing and what art was about for me. More than anything I was exploring the environment and my relationship to it. Because I was at the Work Center, I was privileged to be able to do that, in the sense that I didn't have to worry about public art so much and I could concentrate on doing whatever I wanted without having to consider the public implications. It freed me. Back then, of course, I was documenting the work with the intention of making it public, but in reality it was very very private. The Fine Arts Work Center had a huge effect on my work and on my life in other ways as well. One was the sense of connection to a living art history through my introduction to artists of established reputations. When I took over as Visual Chairman of FAWC, I felt that



"SECRET" 1981

I had inherited a legacy of quality and integrity that had been established by Jack Tworok, Myron Stout, Fritz Bultman, Phil Malicoat, Jim Forsberg, and others. All of these people worked very hard to ensure a program in which artists could work without interruption, in a beautiful natural setting, unencumbered by economic pressures, critical pressures, or even peer pressures. They felt that if a fellow wanted to hide in his studio and see no one for seven months he should be allowed to do so. For me it was an ideal job in the ideal place. The money was lousy, but my passion sustained me. During my tenure I saw the Center come more into national focus, without losing its close sense of community. We had many visitors of distinction from all fields, plus the constants on the committees like Stanley Kunitz and Alan Dugan, as well as artists in Provincetown who were not connected officially to the Center, like Bussy Boghosian and Budd Hopkins. I felt a part of something greater than myself. The other fellows, both artists and writers, were a tremendously talented group. I was close to Sharli Land, David Wheeler, and David Longwell, the chairman before me. Paul Bowen and I had side-by-side studios for almost three years; we were in and out of each other's space on a daily basis, with lots of intense dialogue and critiquing. So while the audience was small, it was superb, serious, and sincere.

**CH:** Yet despite your intense involvement in the outdoor work, eventually you stopped doing it. Why?

**BY:** Though my graduate work and the bulk of my academic background in the fine arts was in photography, I couldn't effectively document the experience of being in the forest and the dune spaces, of going in and out of various areas.

**CH:** When did you actually stop?

**BY:** The last outdoor piece I did was in Saratoga Springs, at Yaddo, in 1981. I just felt I had come to a point where I wanted to concentrate more on the public aspects. I think I had exhausted myself outdoors after six years or more, continually executing work in a very concentrated manner, under all kinds of conditions in every season, and I genuinely wanted to try to concentrate on studio work. I continued to work on drawings, which I had always done in conjunction with the outdoor sculpture. I found out that the translation process, utilizing those materials, the reed, the driftwood and sticks, was extremely difficult and painful. I couldn't get the things to work. I worked for almost three-and-a-half years and did a dozen or so pieces and was satisfied with perhaps two of them. However I don't think I am completely finished with work outdoors.

**CH:** You were also working on drawings that tied off the landscape, yet didn't share the translation problems, the documentation problems of the sculpture. Were the drawings more satisfying because of that?

**BY:** In some senses they were, and in other senses they could be just as difficult because I was approaching the drawing from a

sculptural standpoint. They were all collaged; a lot of them were very laborious. There was real satisfaction in seeing the relationship of the drawings to the sculpture. But I could branch out and do more things with the drawings. So there was a different satisfaction there. At the time I think both endeavors were satisfying precisely because they were connected, one to the other. It made me feel good that there was a sense of wholeness to my activities.

**CH:** The drawings could bring some of what was happening outdoors into the studio where you had more control, and more time.

**BY:** I think that is true. And I think now that had I taken more from my drawings into the sculpture, the indoor sculpture, I might have been more successful. As I started doing indoor sculpture, I tried to apply and utilize some of the materials I was using in the drawings, lots of paper and inks and collage. Had I been a little looser or funkier with those initial attempts in the studio, it could have been easier. When I say loose, I don't mean sloppy. I wanted to increase the range of my vocabulary in terms of making marks. Although most of my drawings were gestural and vigorous, I was still relying on lots of control, and certain marks began to be quite predictable. I thought a more fluid medium would force me to look at different marks and gestures, but I didn't really start to loosen things in a way that I think would have helped until right before we went to Africa in 1983. I began to paint more on paper, with gesso and ink, using a lot of liquid, lots of water, and I became very loose and mushy. It was really joyful to be able to do those things after working with charcoal and inks and chalks and collage and glue, layer upon layer. With painting—liquid on paper—if I didn't like it I could just cover it up and start again. That was liberating. And I started doing that right before we went to Africa, and continued while we were there.

**CH:** What happened in Africa? You went over as a sculptor and came back as a painter.

**BY:** That's ironic. I had been trying to learn how to use wood, to utilize it effectively so that it was truthful indoors. So I thought the best thing to do would be to learn from the beginning, which would be to study traditional primitive carving techniques.

**CH:** And you found out there is nothing primitive about it!

**BY:** It's very difficult. I learned a great deal, and while I was learning how to carve, learning to use primitive tools (especially the West African adze that my teacher used), both learning the principles of carving and just chopping wood every day, I got very frustrated. So in the evenings or in the off times when I could go back home, I found painting on paper was tremendously liberating. For the first time in almost eight years, I was completely away from other artists, and I felt free to do whatever I wanted to do. I let everything that was happening in Africa, everything that I was seeing and feeling, come out—especially everything that I was feeling. I think that was

the key, that perhaps more than anything else I got in touch, or tried to get in touch through my work, with my emotional states.

**CH:** You also were using a lot of color for the first time.

**BY:** Africa for me was the imagery, the iconography, which was figurative, animalistic, primitive. But also it was color. Before I left I had used a little color, but primarily black and white, browns, muted earth tones, reds. Over there, my color just exploded.

**CH:** Now you are working in a studio in an industrial park with a printing press on one side of you and steam cleaners on the other, with surfboard manufacturers and foam furniture makers for your neighbors. Does that seem strange? Do you ever sit there and think of being out in the dunes carrying sticks on your shoulder and wonder how it all connects? Or do you feel connected?

**BY:** I think all the work is connected, even though it may not look like it now. I think that there is a tremendous foundation that was laid in the dunes, in eight years in Provincetown. Mark-making, passages, the drawing, sculpture, and object-making. The dune environment is a completely natural and primitive environment, and the experiences I had out there making sculpture were my attempts to deal with that notion. Needless to say, my African experience is also there. As we found out, it's not all primitive and ritualistic and magical, although that is prevalent there—it's also crazy, third-world disposable technology, high-key color, dance, madness, traffic. All that stuff has combined, and I think the work I'm doing now is smashing together the effects of that long saturated period of development in Provincetown, and the incredible, intense burst of experience in Nigeria. Both to me are equal—even though one was longer than the other. Sometimes lengths of time don't have to be the same for the same kind of impact. My awareness level was consistently high in Africa. I have not had a chance to actually think about how it all relates to living in Southern California. I'm still working on the synthesis of the other two things, and I think I will be for a long time.

**CH:** Ironically, you were seeking what was primitive and primordial on the dunes, and you went to Africa to experience more of that, and instead were thrust right into the modern world, much more than you had been in Massachusetts. These little corners of peace, these artistic havens that we live in are just that, havens, while most of the world is chaos.

**BY:** Africa was throbbing constantly, everywhere, even in the bush, even in the villages there was still an intensity. Even though they may not have been technologically sophisticated, there was still a tremendous clashing of cultures, tribes, religions and technologies. That's not going on in Provincetown. . . . Well, maybe a few tribes are still clashing.

## *Here, The Wind*

*for Bert Yarborough*

The dunes are a polished stone,  
restless and slippery, forever.  
Here, the wind bellows and a flame  
takes shelter in your heart.

Here the wind, drawing land and sea  
and sky together, quilting with  
a thread of dune grass, displays  
its net of ribs, the unreasonable

tide of bones that never turns.  
Now you might stand in the eye  
of this breath and feel the wings  
rooting in your shoulder blades;

or hear the grasses whisper about  
your hair. You might reach down  
and take a chip of pitch pine  
before the sands have towed it under,

and discover how many doors are  
open wide for you the length of its  
gray core. You might try to read  
this signature, or imagine tiny bees

have come to make their honey  
in a lion's tooth; or that the sea  
has used a scrap of wood—this nest  
of corridors—to guide its salts

home. Here, you might feel the air  
possess you, a first time, taking  
leave, inspired by a gull breaking  
for open sea. And you might just be

here, with the wind, and coursing.

—Michael McGuire

## *The Calm Is Such A Long Way Off*

O Jesus the water is glittering again  
the morning is on fire and the wind arcs like  
a giant sea-bird and opens its wings  
across the furred water, ruffling it,  
ruffling the place inside I cannot touch.  
Animal noise, animal teeth and mouth  
chewing on the pillow last night.  
A man rows across the silver water, for a moment,  
becomes it, a flash of oar that ignites  
the desire, not to claim the world  
but to be part of it, as the birds are—  
blue metallic quiver of a tree swallow  
diving in the reeds and marsh grasses,  
snowy egret scissoring into a blue sky—  
to find my place, not like the mocking bird,  
whose song is everyone's song,  
but like the field sparrow, brown and indistinct,  
whose one unchanging song quavers in its throat.

—Candice Reffe

# SUBLIME:



MARY SHERWOOD

'A BRIEF HISTORY

## A Philosophical Inquiry into the Beautiful, Sublime and Picturesque

by Charles Giuliano

*Charles Giuliano is editing the September and October issues of Art New England. He also writes for Art News and The Patriot Ledger.*

It is hard to imagine any artist who has spent time in Provincetown not being influenced by its spectacular sense of light, air, and space. Artists have interpreted it individually from direct realistic and impressionist studies of nature and as filtered through philosophical and emotional responses. It is interesting to think that historic Provincetown artists as diverse as Charles Hawthorne, Childe Hassam, Karl Knaths, Edwin Dickinson, Ross Moffett, Milton Avery, and Hans Hofmann have set up their easels before the same timeless vistas. Today there is less of a sense of artists sketching and working from nature. Perhaps that's why I enjoy so much the sight of Paul Resika in his whites, down on the beach, with his brushes stuck into the sand.

His oil on paper series of studies of the ice house on the end of the town pier has carried on a venerable tradition. But the fact that we see relatively few artists out on the dunes today is symptomatic of a larger change and phenomenon in recent times, of how we have come to view the landscape as a suitable subject for artists.

The problem, ironically, is not that there isn't any landscape painting going on. Quite the opposite condition prevails. As a matter of fact, there is far too much landscape painting going on, and most of it is just yuck. I love to watch those hacks on TV who tell the folks at home how to paint a landscape step-by-step. On an aesthetic basis, these how-to painting shows are little different from the ever-popular cooking shows. Art becomes a matter of taking a bit of this and adding a bit of that—and voila.

But the average American thinks that art is

a view of a sunset with ducks flying over marshes, moonlit surf, or an arrangement of lobster traps and pots. In the modern era, a great tradition of the landscape has fallen on hard times by becoming over popular, to the point of forming the pop vernacular. These are the same people who buy cypress knee clocks and glass coffee tables over driftwood.

It is hard today to think of any contemporary landscape painting being taken seriously as representing the cutting edge of avant-garde art. And yet, some of the most radical art produced in the 18th and 19th centuries centered on theories of landscape, from the American Luminist movement of 1840-1870 and the French painters from the Barbizon, through Post Impressionism. But the major art movements of post WWII American art, with the exception of Realism, have not dealt with landscape as an aesthetic issue. While some environmental artists, such as Christo, Robert

Morris, James Turrell, Robert Smithson, and Walter Di Maria, have given us a new sense of nature, Richard Serra seems to underscore the notion of artists who arrogantly place their art above the needs of individuals who have to live with and even compete with their works (as exemplified by the "Tilted Arc" controversy).

One of the major problems in the American art world comes from its focus in Manhattan. On that tight little island it is hard to imagine anyone thinking much about nature. This has resulted, it seems to me, in contemporary American art having a particularly urban bias. It is an art that is largely reflective of the viewpoint of individuals who live and work in Manhattan. This is what determines the taste for anything, from Color Field Painting, to Minimalism, Pop and on down the line to Neo Geo.

It has been interesting for me, however, to notice the increasing number and variety of young artists who are approaching the landscape seemingly without the hangups and inhibitions of artists of the past few generations. These artists have relatively few contemporary masters to contend with. Undoubtedly they have gone back and looked at Dove, O'Keeffe, Hartley, and Marin, and they have been influenced by Hopper and Fairfield Porter; or perhaps they have admired the pastels of William Beckman and his studies of Berkshire farms, or Gregory Gillespie's weird landscapes, some of which are mysterious and menacing. But nature as a theme and reference seems to be a strong force in a number of recent exhibitions. The Massachusetts College of Art recently organized "The Tree Show," which included nineteen artists. The show was curated by Jeffrey Keough, with a catalogue essay by Norman Keyes, Jr. And recently, I curated "The Beautiful, the Sublime, the Picturesque" for the Newton Art Center. Actually, of the nine artists in the Newton show, just two—Mary Sherwood and Paul Oberst—overlapped with "The Tree Show." And one might easily imagine quite a number of other young artists who would have been appropriate for these shows.

It seems significant that Ellen Driscoll from "The Tree Show" and Paul Oberst, Mary Armstrong, Stoney Conley, and Elizabeth Awalt were all fellows at Provincetown's Fine Arts Work Center. One might add to this list the sculptor Paul Bowen, who fashions his sculpture from specially treated objects that he gathers along the beach.

When I started thinking a lot about the landscape in the past few years, I was influenced by research and teaching centered on 19th century American and European art. There is



ANNE NEELY

"ROSE WALL"

a vast body of literature that has been built up about the work, but all theoretical discussion stems back to a foundation in Edmund Burke's "Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas on the Sublime and the Beautiful," which was published in 1756. The 19th century English theorist John Ruskin expanded on these landscape categories, while the American painter Asher B. Durand in turn simplified Ruskin's ideas in his "Letters to a Young Landscape Painter," which were printed in the art magazine *The Crayon*.

Scholars differ in their detailed analyses of the categories—the beautiful, the sublime, the picturesque—but there are basic premises that were set forth by Burke. The sublime is the most interesting of the categories and seems to have had the greatest inspiration for artists. It represents everything extreme in nature—earthquakes, sunrise and sunset, fire, disasters, moonlight, ruins, icebergs. The beautiful is largely a matter of degree. Whereas the Alps and the Rocky Mountains are sublime, the Berkshires are merely beautiful. Niagara Falls is clearly sublime, while Bash Bish Falls is just picturesque. The picturesque represents a quaint or colorful detail. Cows grazing or sea gulls flying would be picturesque, as would a lighthouse, a windmill, a cottage, or a cart.

At times it is interesting to see how literal are the relationships between great landscape paintings and the theories of Burke and Ruskin. The English artist J. M. W. Turner illustrated Ruskin's theory of the sublime in his

great painting "The Slave Ship." It can be fun to think about Burke's categories when looking at Thomas Cole's epic potboilers "The Voyage of Life" and the "Course of Empire," in which the beautiful represents a utopian acadia and the sublime, decline and fall. The 19th century treated such moralizing works as Cole's paintings as fodder for Sunday morning sermons. While we see the ravaged and gnarled as sublime, Barbara Novak, the American art historian, has argued that the sublime can also represent limpid still water and an eerie sense of calm, as encountered in works by Washington Allston and Martin Heade.

After a while, the beautiful, the sublime, the picturesque became something of a parlor game for me. It is the adult, sophisticated, art-historical equivalent of charades. Instead of Monopoly, do "the Burke." When I discussed these categories and landscape theory with the artists in the show that I recently curated, they inevitably asked, Am I beautiful? Am I sublime? Or, am I picturesque?

The artist Harry Bartnick suggested that for his work we would need another category, "The Defiled." He is evolving a series of new works that offer bird's-eye views of dense forest in which there are cancerous modern factories and strip mines or oil rigs. It is a grim, but also highly detailed and indicting, view of what we are doing to dwindling natural resources.

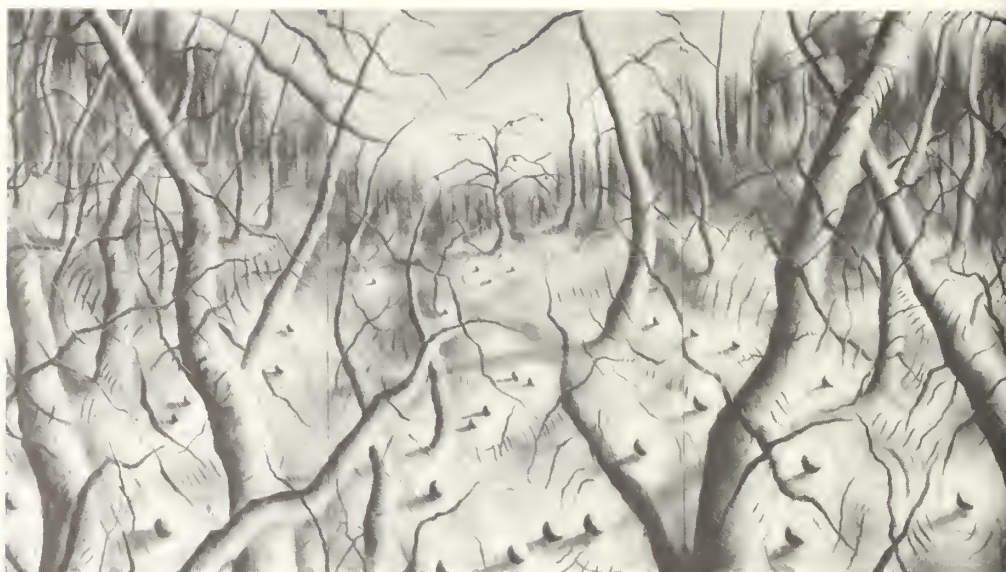
In the past couple of years, Mary Sherwood has appropriated 19th century landscape

paintings, often juxtaposed with a detail gleaned from Italian Renaissance artists. Sherwood's work has received considerable curatorial and critical attention because of its timely use of issues involving appropriation and simulation. By approaching her work from this conceptual vantage point, Sherwood comes to her images by looking at and thinking about the part of the past.

This is just the opposite of the working method of the artists Anne Neely and Elizabeth Awalt in the Newton show. Last summer, Anne and Liz traveled together to France to make landscape studies in oil stick in sketch books, which they have spent this past winter translating and enlarging in scale into finished oil paintings. For this show, Neely included a single large work, "The Rose Wall," that she feels represents a major breakthrough in terms of solving a number of formal problems. While her images are site specific, she also lets her inner feeling influence how she interprets nature, and her work can be emotional and expressionistic in the tradition of Van Gogh, Matisse, and Gauguin. Liz, on the other hand, seems to have two distinct approaches. In one body of work, she is a keen observer of nature, as in the eight-foot-high painting of a tree in the recent show. In another vein, Awalt paints romantic night scenes or images of gnarled and scorched trees. Her tree paintings recall Courbet and Durand with their faithful observation of species and detail.

An awareness of nature, as well as of the history of art, has been shared by Mary Armstrong and Stoney Conley, who met at the Skowhegan School of Art when they were students. A couple of summers ago, I visited them at Skowhegan while Stoney was teaching fresco painting. When I walked into his rustic studio in a bucolic setting, I was startled to find that he had just finished an image of "The Deluge," depicting Noah's Ark. When I asked how he could be sitting in the Maine woods thinking about the Old Testament flood, the answer was succinct: "Well, it rained the first three weeks we were here," he said. The image of a natural disaster fits into the concept of the sublime, as did Conley's other image in the show, "The Grim Reaper," which depicts a scythe and the eternal fire of damnation. Conley recalls that it was inspired by a legend in a painting by the master Orcagna in the church of Santa Croce in Florence: "Neither learning, riches, high birth or bravery count for anything against her blows."

In earlier work, Armstrong painted still-life subjects, often involving fabric and small bowls with Oriental designs. In the past cou-



PAUL OBERST

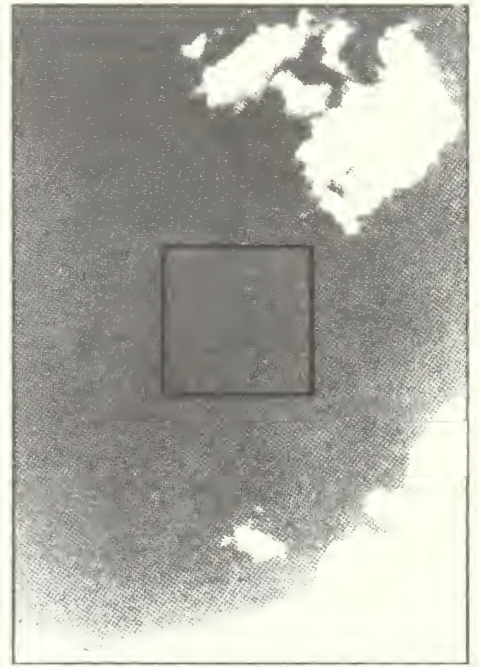
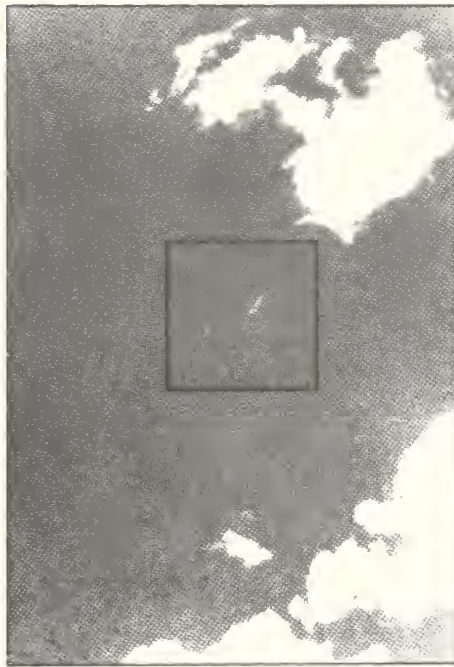
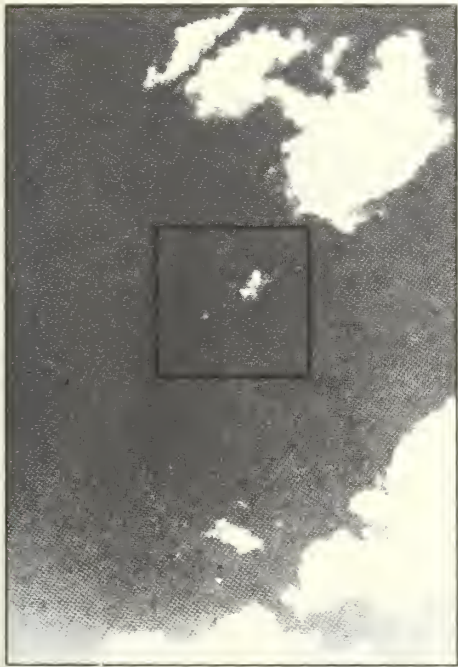
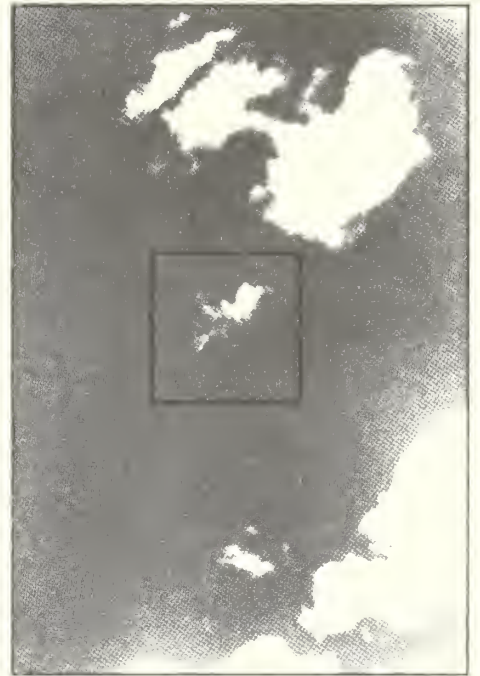
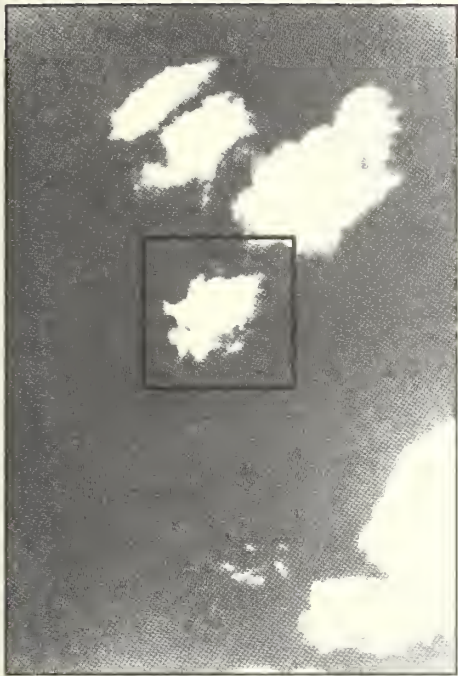
"GATHERING AT THE OSAGE TREE" 1986



ELIZABETH AWALT

"The Deluge"

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*Peter Hutchinson, Aspen, August 1970*

Peter Hutchinson

4/75

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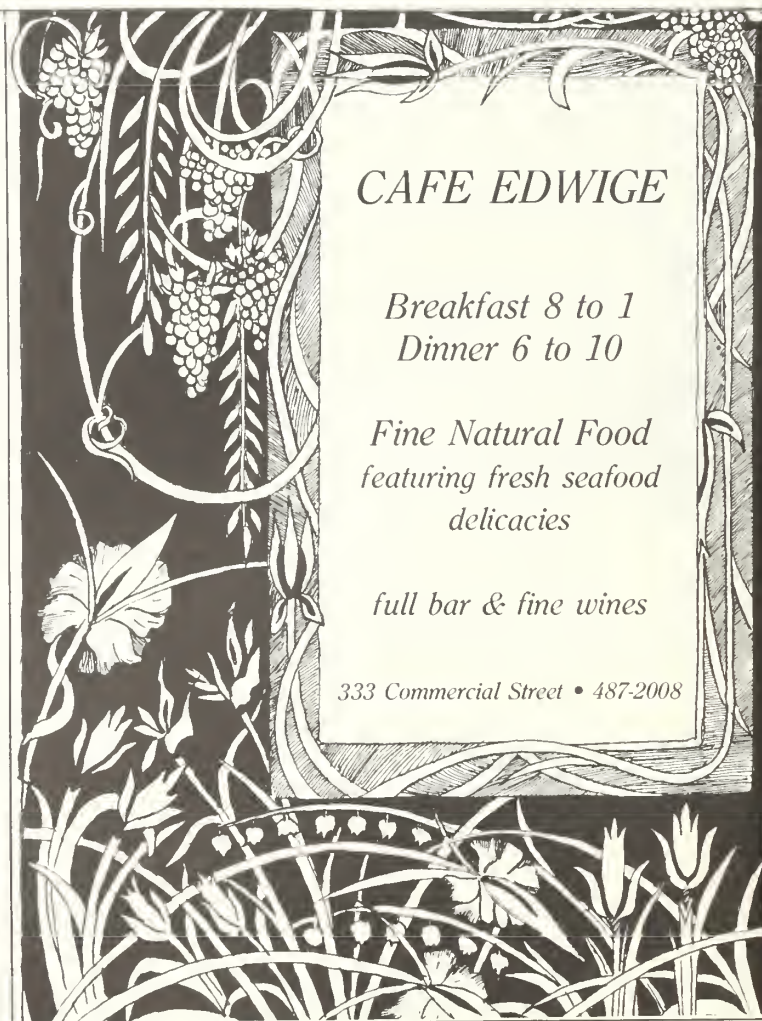
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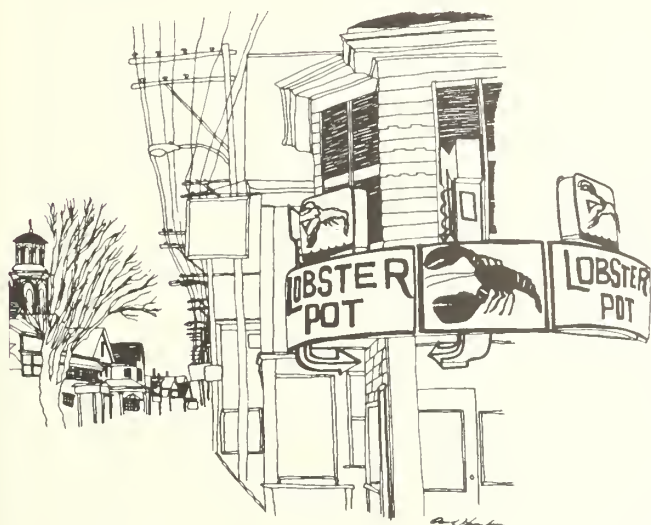
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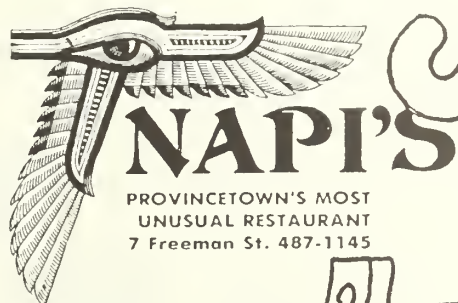


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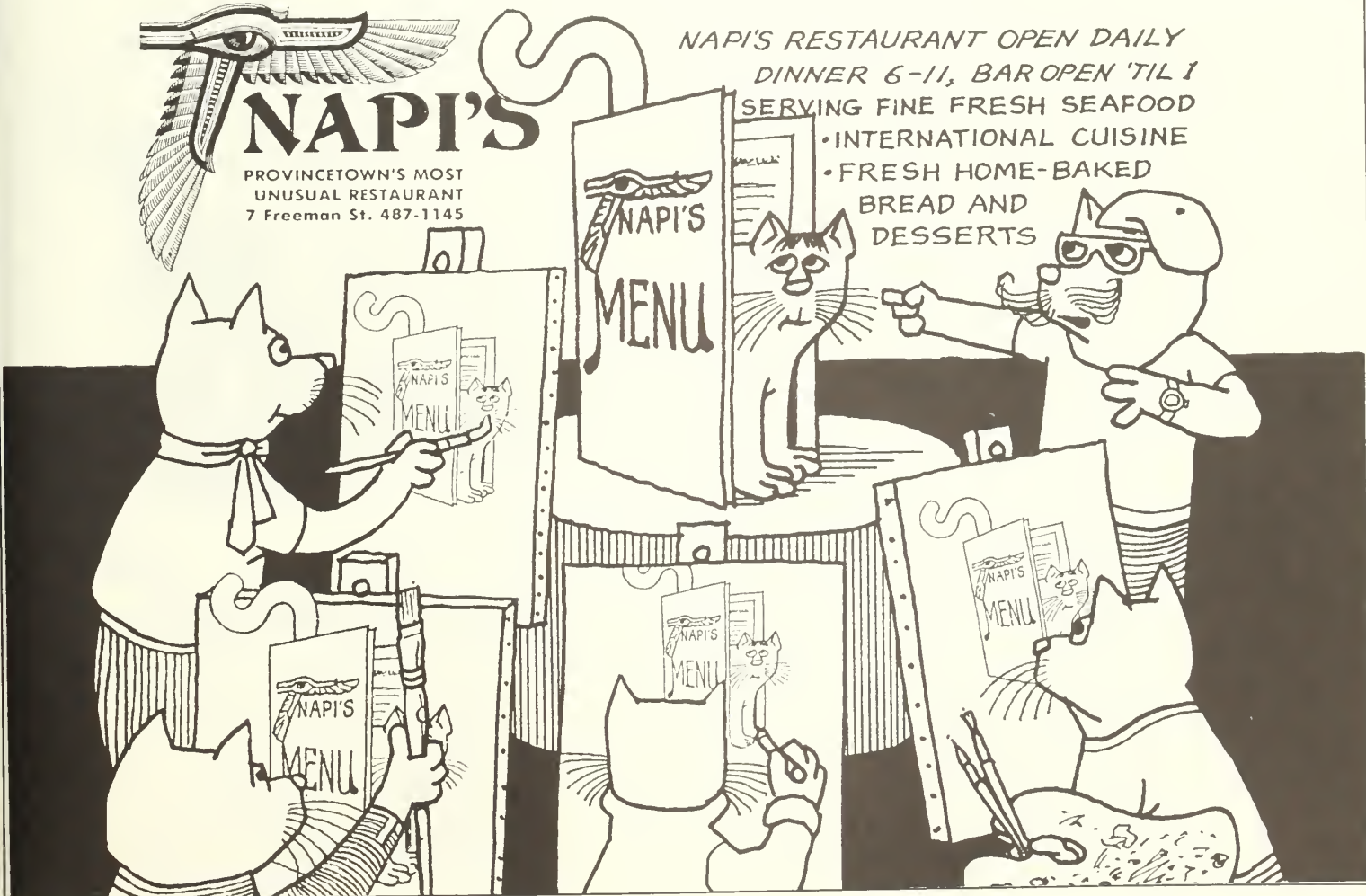
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# THE MAN IN

By Anne Bernays

It was so damp envelope flaps stuck without being licked and Paula's straw bag from Kenya swelled and stiffened. Salt wouldn't pour, bath towels broke out in mildew.

Jonas Shand was eating too much. Paula, his wife, was edgy, as if the moisture had gotten beneath her skin. Their guests, Frank and Lindsey Pearl, had gone as limp as the saltines. Except for an occasional groan or throat clearing, the two couples were muted on the third straight day of rain, reading and rereading the Sunday New York *Times*. Jonas suggested they consider turning out license plates.

Lindsey, who had been Paula's friend since their parents lived next door to each other, said, "I think they call this cabin fever. Let's go for a walk."

"It's too cold for me," Paula said. "Besides, that couple from New Jersey is coming to look at the house."

Jonas stood by the front window, chewing an English muffin. The odor of braised onions hung in the air; droplets of fat stuck to the wall behind the stove.

"There's mist on the inside of the window. God," Lindsey said. "I just might go back to Boston. I mean, I'm an outdoor girl. I'm not good at inactivity. What's on TV?"

"Why don't you read a book?" Frank asked her. "You're always on my case about not reading anything but Alvin Toffler and *Penthouse*. Why don't you read a book?"

"Who asked you?" Lindsey said.

"What couple from New Jersey?" Frank said. Hunched into the couch, he let the sports section droop from the ends of his fingers. He hadn't shaved in two days; he looked swarthy and a tad wicked. His orange shirt seemed psychedelic against the gray light.

The wind gauge needle was nudging thirty-two miles per hour; the plastic dome above

the room—which served as living room, kitchen, and dining room—shifted with a squawk. The downpour changed to a drizzle; it looked, for a moment, as if it might stop.

"I told you last night," Paula said. "You were probably too smashed to remember. The Finleys. They're building one of these Pinecone pre-fabs and want to see our layout. I don't really know what they want to see, since they're all more or less identical. . . ."

"Things can't be more or less identical,"

Jonas said. "They either are or they aren't."

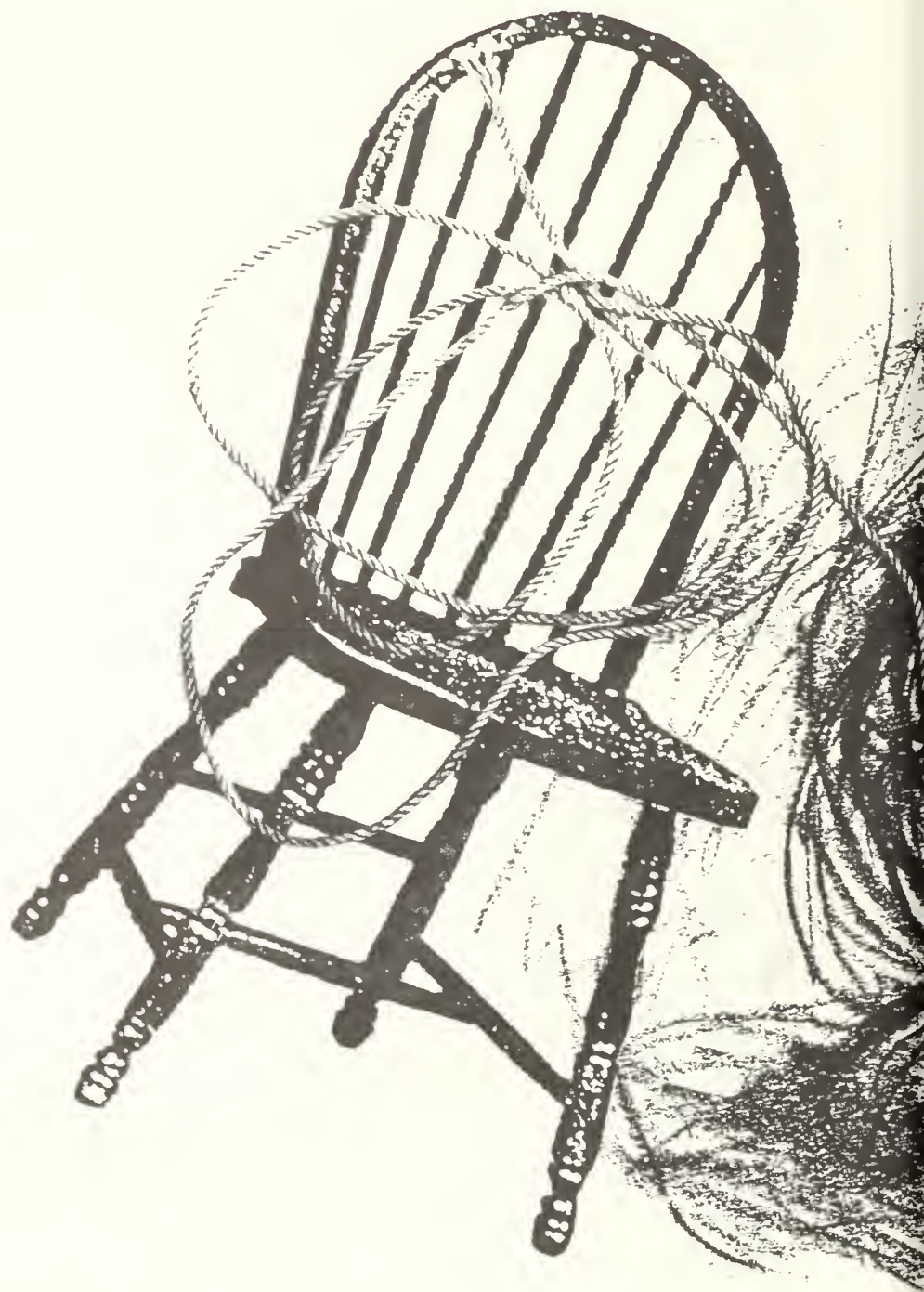
Paula let this pass.

Having finished the muffin, Jonas opened the refrigerator. "Where's that macaroni salad?"

"On a level with your eyes," Paula said through her teeth. "Are you trying to eat your way out of another claustrophobia attack?"

"I'm not phobic," Jonas said. "Just hungry. What are you talking about?"

"Remember last winter on the plane to San



# THE CHAIR



JIM PETERS

Juan? You thought you were going to pass out."

Jonas brought the macaroni salad to the table, still littered with breakfast things, coffee pot, jelly jar. "Why do they want to see this place if it's just like the one they're building?" he said to Paula.

"Let's ask them when they get here, shall we?" Why was she talking to her husband as if she hated him?

The phone rang. Jonas answered: "Pro-

vincetown Horse and Carriage."

Paula and Lindsey exchanged a look.

"No, you haven't got the wrong number, and yes, this is 349-6386," Jonas said. "I was kidding around. How can I be of service to you?"

A fresh squall moved across the bay towards the house, lines of rain radiating earthward, as off a gray sun.

"Sure thing," Jonas said. "Do you know how to get here?" He gave directions, exact

to tenths of a mile, then hung up. "Man, is that guy Finley a straight arrow," he said. "He sounded as if he was firming up a board meeting."

"After they leave, why don't we go out to lunch. Fried clams, cole slaw?" Paula said.

"I'm good for another round of *Trivial Pursuit*," Frank said.

"Boar-ring," Jonas said. "Play once and you know all the answers."

"Maybe you do," Frank said.

"I have a better idea," Jonas said., "Why don't we have some creative fun right now? Why don't we engage these folks in a little experiment. And—I've got it—why don't we start by tying one of us in a chair? Say, Frank."

Frank dropped the newspaper. "I'm not sure I heard you right. Did you say you wanted to tie me up?"

Jonas strode across the room and stood with his back to the free-standing fireplace.

"Here's my idea," he said. "We tie Frank to a chair, like in *Arsenic and Old Lace*, with your hands behind your back and your feet together. We put a gag in your mouth and tape it over, and when the Finleys arrive your eyes are bulging and you're struggling to get free."

"You must be joking," Frank said.

"Do I get a vote?" Paula said. In the old days they crafted games together. She had the feeling that Jonas was about to solo.

"Of course you get a vote. A Moscow vote." Lindsey smiled. Paula felt as if pressure were being applied to the artery in her neck.

"It's a test," Jonas said. "Like that medical school dean who left tippy ashtrays full of butts in front of applicants to see if they would do something or just sit there like dummies. Why are you looking like that, Paula? We're so god-damn uptight no one wants to try anything wild any more; we're all program-



med for the grave. ✕

"Will you please tell me what the grave has to do with one of your practical jokes?"

"If you don't know, there's no use in my trying to explain."

Paula realized that if the Pearls had not been there this conversation might explode into another argument.

"You see," Jonas said, appealing to Frank, "I contend that these folks will be too polite to say anything. They'll see you trussed up, look right through you, and act as if you weren't there. They have no vocabulary for this kind of situation."

"No way," Frank said. He got up and began to pace.

"The more I think of it, the funnier it gets," Lindsey said.

"You would," Frank said to her. "You also like jokes about Chernobyl."

"Look what's happening," Paula said. "We're at each other's throats."

"Come on, Paula honey, be a sport," Jonas said.

"If you're about to call me a wet blanket, forget it, Jonas. Your jokes have a way of backfiring. Remember those letters you wrote to the Barrys, the ones you signed with Erik Erikson's name, and they believed it?"

"Len Barry doesn't know the difference between wit and a hole in the ground."

A squall hit the house with a rush of noise. Rain plunked to the dome, slid down its round sides, fell across the room and onto the sand.

Paula was sure Jonas's idea had gone past the conjecture stage when he said, "This is foolproof; it can't backfire. We tie up Frank, the Finleys come in, they pretend he's not there. Who wants to bet with me?"

Paula sighed. "Here we go again."

"How about it, Frank?" Jonas insisted.

"Don't be a stick-in-the-mud," Lindsey told him. "We're all bored out of our skulls."

Frank said, "It'll make me look stupid."

"If anyone looks stupid, it's the rest of us," Jonas said. "How can you pass this up? Look, if you want me to be the man in the chair, I'll do it. But since I just spoke to What's-his-name. . . ." Paula could tell, from the excitement in his throat, that Jonas was deciding which kind of tape to use, duct or masking.

Frank sighed. "I must be crazy to go along with this," he said. "But okay, I'll do it." He frowned at his wife.

With a yowl, Jonas ran downstairs and got some heavy-duty rope and a roll of masking tape—less painful to remove. Meanwhile, after going to the bathroom—"Just in case this takes a long time"—Frank sat in a chair. It

amazed Paula, as always, how her husband could make people—including herself—do things they didn't want to do. Jonas the charmer.

"Your gag, monsieur," she said, producing a clean handkerchief, which Frank stuffed into his mouth. The women giggled, uneasy. Jonas was all business. He wound the rope around Frank's wrists, crossed in back of the chair. "Shake your head if it's too tight. Now, put your feet together."

When it came to the tape, Jonas said to Lindsey, "Maybe you'd better do this part."

"It's a pleasure," Lindsey said, clapping the tape over her husband's lips.

"Suddenly squeamish?" Paula said to Jonas.

"Bite your tongue, child," he said.

Paula asked Frank if he was sure he was okay. He nodded, but his eyes were spooky and his arms were stretched in a way that could not conceivably be comfortable. Was this funny?

Tires crunched in the driveway. Two car doors slammed. "Now don't break up," Jonas said. "If you feel like you're going to laugh, do it in the bathroom. Just don't blow it."

Paula went outside to greet the Finleys. Mr. Finley, compact and going bald honestly, was wearing a hip-length yellow slicker. He stuck out his hand and said his name was Phillip. The woman was Helen. She wore a slicker like her husband's. Paula guessed they were in their middle fifties. "We certainly appreciate your letting us barge in on you this way."

"Not at all," Paula said, regretting everything, prepared to "blow it" even if it meant weeks of frost between her and Jonas.

With a sweeping gesture, Jonas drew the Finleys into the house.

"As you can see, he said, "we're sort of at loose ends." He introduced them to Lindsey who, from in back of the "News of the Week in Review," said, "Hi there." Jonas said, "Mizz Pearl calls it cabin fever."

"We could do with a spot of sun," Phillip Finley said.

Paula saw Helen Finley stare at the man in the chair as if he were a dying elephant and she couldn't connect eye to brain. Helen blinked; her knees gave an inch or two and she grabbed her husband's sleeve so hard he almost lost his balance.

Frank warmed to the part. He pulled and strained at the rope, grunted, rocked the chair. Lindsey stayed behind the paper.

"Built like a brick shithouse," Jonas was saying. "Tight as a drum. The dome is a window to the sky; it's beautiful on a starry night." The Finleys looked up.

Paula escaped into the bedroom where she folded the comforter. Jonas followed, escorting the Finleys. "The master bedroom," he said. "We have an incomparable view."

"It's magnificent," Helen Finley whispered. She's plucky, Paula decided. Why are we doing this to them?

"Would you like to see how we've solved the downstairs problem?" Jonas asked.

"That sounds like a good idea," Phillip said. His eyes looked worried; he touched his wife's back.

"The children's rooms are down here," Jonas said. "They claim it's the basement, but as you can see, the front rooms are level with the site."

The sounds of Frank's struggle reached them from the room above. Jonas expanded as the tour continued, though there was not much to show, the house being simple in the manner of beach cottages built in the early Seventies for a moderate price.

"Do you find the closets adequate?" Helen asked. Paula noticed a thread of perspiration across her brow.

"Oh yes," Paula said, "though you might want to put up some hooks. The Pinecone folks don't seem to like hooks."

"Hooks are lower class," said Jonas, leading the way. They peered into the laundry room where junk was accumulating, a broken hibachi, a carton of empties, a picture frame without a picture.

"Where's Helen?" Paula said.

"She's catching her breath," Phillip said. "She had heart surgery, you know, almost a year ago. She's fully recovered. I think it's more a nervous thing. Maybe I'd better go see if she's all right." He scuttled out of the laundry room. A minute or so later Paula went to look for them.

She found them in her son Andy's room. Helen Finley was on her back on Andy's bed, knees bent, feet, in topsiders, pointed away from each other. Her body looked like a girl's, but her face was ashy and there were drops of sweat on her forehead. She was breathing in short, shallow gasps. Phillip sat on the bed beside her, talking to her. His head snapped around as Paula came into the room. "Is there a rescue squad out here? My wife needs help immediately."

"My God," Paula said, "what happened? Is she all right?"

"No, she's not all right. Now will you please phone for help?"

"Is there anything else I can do?"

"Go," he shouted, standing. "Do it! Do you  
(Continued on page 121)

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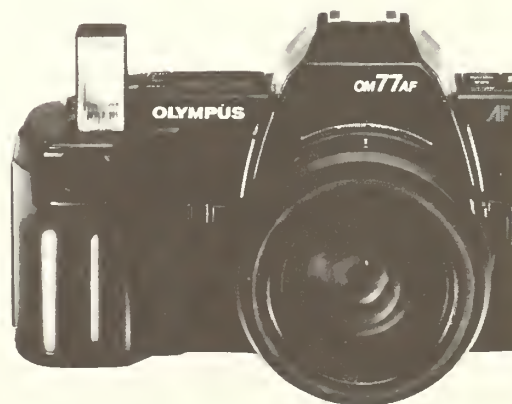
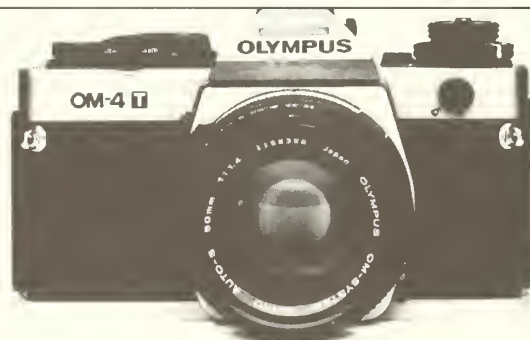
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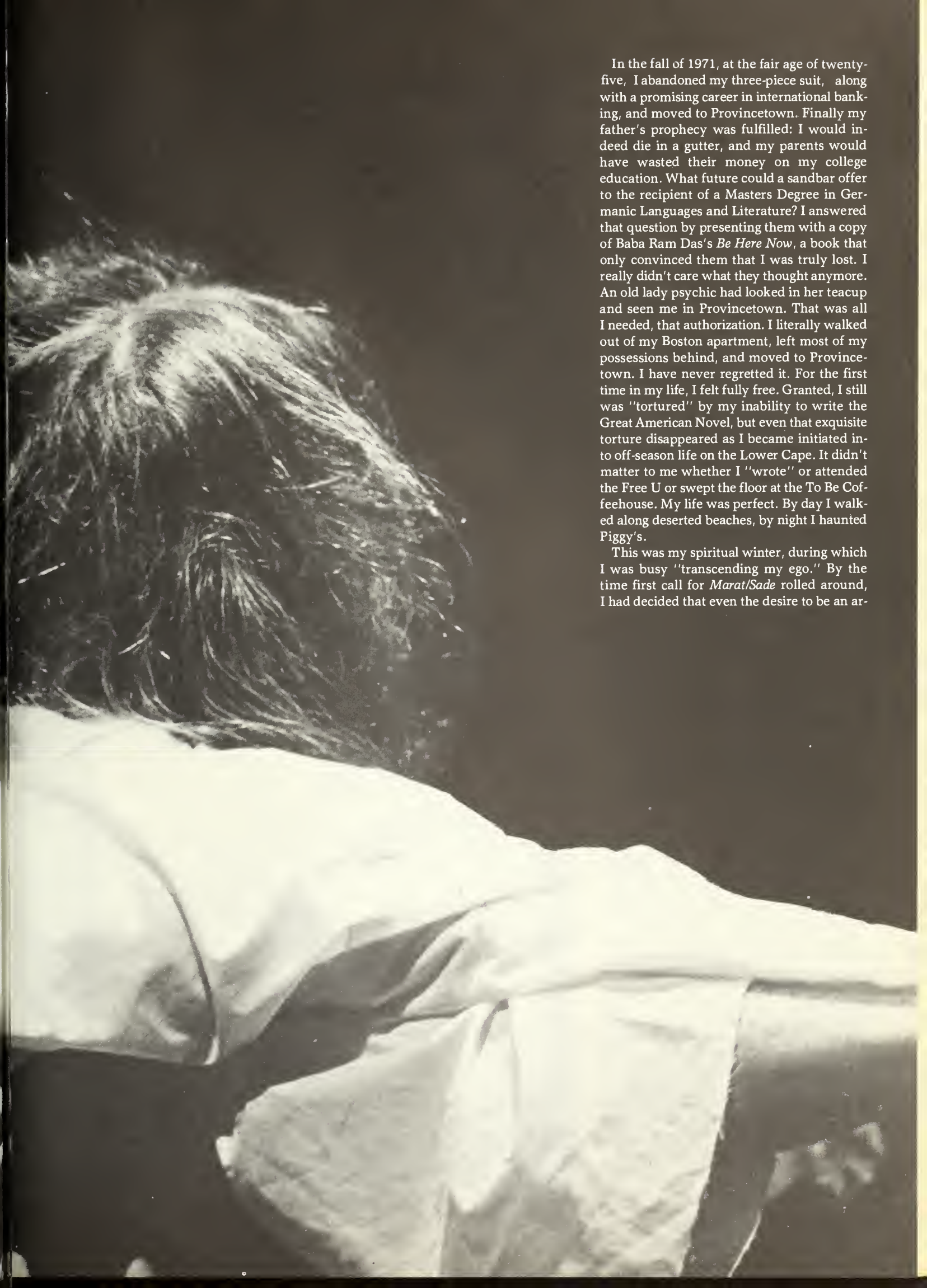
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# THE EARLY DAYS OF THE PROVINCETOWN THEATER COMPANY

By Charles Horne





In the fall of 1971, at the fair age of twenty-five, I abandoned my three-piece suit, along with a promising career in international banking, and moved to Provincetown. Finally my father's prophecy was fulfilled: I would indeed die in a gutter, and my parents would have wasted their money on my college education. What future could a sandbar offer to the recipient of a Masters Degree in Germanic Languages and Literature? I answered that question by presenting them with a copy of Baba Ram Das's *Be Here Now*, a book that only convinced them that I was truly lost. I really didn't care what they thought anymore. An old lady psychic had looked in her teacup and seen me in Provincetown. That was all I needed, that authorization. I literally walked out of my Boston apartment, left most of my possessions behind, and moved to Provincetown. I have never regretted it. For the first time in my life, I felt fully free. Granted, I still was "tortured" by my inability to write the Great American Novel, but even that exquisite torture disappeared as I became initiated into off-season life on the Lower Cape. It didn't matter to me whether I "wrote" or attended the Free U or swept the floor at the To Be Coffeehouse. My life was perfect. By day I walked along deserted beaches, by night I haunted Piggy's.

This was my spiritual winter, during which I was busy "transcending my ego." By the time first call for *Marat/Sade* rolled around, I had decided that even the desire to be an ar-

tist was impure. When a friend requested that I go with her to audition, I refused. Please understand that I was born with sawdust in my blood. At age two, I needed little prompting to get me to recite "The Night Before Christmas." At age ten, I staged impromptu back-yard shows. In high school and college, I'd drop everything for the opportunity to be in a play. But not in that "spiritual" winter of 1972. No, now theater had become a bastard art, a brazen ego-attachment, a kind of public masturbation.

My insistent friend, who tried to drag me to auditions, was Bonnie Horwitz. (She would later play Charlotte Corday and assassinate me.) Bonnie and I were part of a mini-commune known as "Absurd Lives for Peace"—the name had been suggested to us by friends in Cambridge who called themselves "Wasted Lives for Peace." Unlike our urban friends, we were "absurd" because we tried to do more than get stoned and listen to records, even if by "more" we meant nothing more than restoring an old Colonial house in exchange for rent. A year later, these same "wasted" compatriots moved to Provincetown and I cast them all in *Peter Pan*. A number of them are still active members of the Theater Company today. But in 1972, it wasn't the Theater Company; it was merely a theater workshop, and Edmond Di Stasi's proposal for a full-scale production of *The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade* was greeted with grave reservations.

"It's crazy!" insisted Ray Wells, who later became Edmond's assistant director, "Where do you expect to find all the actors?"

"They're already here," Edmond answered for all of us waiting in the wings.

On a snowy Sunday night in December, Bonnie Horwitz victoriously dragged me to first call. At least sixty other actors sprawled on the floor of the Art Association. My resistance dissolved. The tension and phoniness which had made me hate theater, especially auditions, was completely absent from that room. The audition looked and felt like a Be-In. Edmond gestured around the room, saying, yes, there were principal roles to be assigned, but not until we had become inmates of the Asylum of Charenton.

Recently Edmond reminded me that "first call" is an old theater term: it is the first call a stage manager gives to actors on the night of a performance. Indeed, that first night of auditions was the first of many performances that led straight to opening night and beyond. For most rehearsals we had large audiences. From the start, the play belonged as much to the audience as to the actors, actor and audience sharing a combined fiction. All of us were part of that failed revolution known as the Sixties. We migrated from the city to the country, and extended the freedom of our



Photo: Fred Hemley

youth into adulthood; yet we could not avoid the painful reality that the Sixties were ours. We had been shouting the *Marat/Sade* battle cry for years, and now, whether we were ready to face it or not, the political revolution was dead. It began to die with the assassinations of Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King. Nixon's election turned the knife. The last gasp came at Kent State, which was the funeral of the revolution. Maybe that is why this 1972 Provincetown production had more poignancy for me than the events in the tumultuous decade before. Then, we were too close to the revolution; now, with the passage of time, we could express it better.

In the wake of the old one, another revolution was forming, a personal revolution shared that winter by every exile in Provincetown. Each of us sought ways to overthrow our own personal tyranny. *Marat/Sade* gave us the means. Three times a week, from the first of January to the end of March, we practiced the freedom of insanity. There was method to our madness, not chaos. We spent the first hour doing "isolations," a series of physically demanding exercises based on Grotowski's "Plastiques," in which we had to limit our movement solely to one portion of the body: an elbow, an eye, a shoulder. This accomplished, the "principals" went to the back room where Ray Wells pounded heavy-duty Stanislawski into our systems, while Edmond worked with the others with music. Later, we all were reunited in the front room of the Art Association (the most fertile space for theater I have known). Edmond would ask us to close our eyes and lie down on the floor. He told us, after a period of silence, that we would open our eyes back in time, in the nineteenth century asylum at Charenton. When he snapped his fingers and we opened our eyes, we were there. Softly, in the background, Edmond suggested that some of us were religious zealots, others were atheists. (Guess which I chose!) Suddenly someone would appear with a cross. Without prompting from Edmond, the zealots began their twisted version of a Gregorian chant, while the atheists kicked at crosses. If a zealot resurrected himself as Christ, an atheist crucified him. All the rehearsals had one thing in common: each one was never the same. We rehearsed what we would never repeat.

Psychologists say that insanity is a learned behavior. It is true that we were learning to be insane. There were risks involved. Edmond reminded us incessantly that this was only a play. He was not being over cautious: we were shocked to discover that some of the brilliant work done in rehearsals was not acting at all, but the real thing. The Drop-In Center (for emotional and mental counseling) kept sending us their best basket cases on a regular basis, so we were blessed with a few genuine lunatics. Some worked out; some did not. More disturbing was evidence of our own insanity (assuming we were not crazy to begin with). I myself was cast as Marat, the paranoid maniac—type-casting, some would say. Within a month of rehearsal, I was convinced that Edmond, Bonnie, and Rodney Garbato (the Marquis de Sade), were conspiring to turn me into a different person. Remember: this was my "spiritual" winter, and I was prone to feeling contaminated, not only by the ego-worship of theater, but also by the obviously anti-transcendental rhetoric of Marat's revolutionary ideology. Things got so bad, I stopped talking to everyone, and two days before the opening I flew into a paranoid rage and dropped out of the production. In the middle of my rantings, I heard myself calling Rodney "Sade" and Bonnie "Corday." For the first time since first call, I began to worry seriously about my sanity. Around me, everyone was in tears, except Edmond, who was smiling. I ran from the stage, jumped into my hand-painted red-white-and-blue VW, and drove furiously to Race Point. The moon shone on the water, and I listened to the calming sound of the breaking waves. After a time I returned to the Art Association where I was welcomed with love and understanding.

*Marat/Sade* left a lasting impression on all of us, including the audience. Here was participatory theater in its finest hour—not only because the audience had a role to play (nineteenth century French aristocrats), but also because most of the audience had already been present at rehearsals and had become integrated with the process. They were participating in a community ritual, like the ancient Greeks. By opening night, the audience had perfected its part.

A week after the final performance, I was washing dishes at the To Be Coffeehouse. One

day, a guy came running into the kitchen, acting as if I were his long-lost best friend. I can't remember what he said, except that he was very animated and that he was convinced I understood him as no one had. I was about to tell him that I didn't know who he was, but then he called me "Marat." I realized he was not making any distinction between me, the hippy at the sink, and Marat, the historical hippy in the tub. I decided not to correct him. The play had been real to him, and besides, he was tripping on mescaline, I soon discovered. Ironically, the night he had seen the play was the sole night I toyed with the idea of dropping a little mescaline myself. I am glad I did not. If I had, I probably would not be able to report anything except that Ray Wells wore red at every rehearsal. I didn't need to trip. This was the formative experience of my life.

When I pick up my copy of the program for opening night, March 24, 1972, I am shocked to see that only a handful of us are still even associated with Provincetown—Edmond most of all! Many of us are dead: Nicky Wells, Mimi Weissman, Thom Robbio, Peter Team, Carla Andrade, Jonathan Perry—others I may not know about. This was only fifteen years ago. Most of us were in our twenties. At the risk of sounding crazy, I will say that *Marat/Sade* accelerated the process of Becoming. We became, and went. This is why we came to Provincetown in the first place. Everyone in that cast found a new direction in his or her life. On opening night, Edmond gave each of us a present and a card. He gave me a letter opener in the shape of a dagger. On my card he wrote, "This is only the beginning." For the Provincetown Theater Company, it was; for me, too. In the fifteen years since, I have never produced, directed, or written a play without trying to capture the magic, the mystery, and the truth of that unique 1972 production of *Marat/Sade*.

*Charles Horne has directed many plays for the Provincetown Theater Company. He is currently artistic director of the Landmark Theater in Syracuse, N.Y.*

# DREAMING IN PUBLIC

## *A Provincetown Memoir*



*By Susan Mitchell*

The winter of 1979, I lived in a condominium down by the tennis courts at the east end of Provincetown. The apartment was large enough to span the land world and the sea world, each with its own flora and fauna, sounds and smells. When I stood under the skylight on the land side and looked out on Commercial Street, men slim as their ten-speed bicycles shadowed past, and pink-jeaned girls with enormous eyes whizzed by on roller skates faster than my IBM Selectric could type anorexia or cocaine. Under the skylight was a waterbed, and drifting out on it, I stared up into sky. "I have done a good deal of skying," Constable wrote in 1822, the year he painted most of his cloud studies. I did a good deal of skying, too—into the green and black foliage of cumulonimbus, into that gaseous, chloroformed light that precedes sudden and violent storms. Sometimes a strong wind tossed and lowered a tree branch against the skylight. In fine weather, that tree pulsed

with small golden birds, finches that must have eaten food touched by Midas—even their excrement was liquid gold. I loved skying into weather just developing: clouds rapidly changing to mist, swirling apart until suddenly the skylight framed shades of blue; blurs and blots of clouds, a vast calligraphy that kept erasing, then rewriting itself in an excess, an exuberance of alphabets, or into a patois of bruises, a jargon of violet streakings, thick squid ink that seemed the very opacity of language and desire.

The bedroom, with its white chest of drawers, white chair, blue rug, and white curtains was on the bay side. The low bed seemed a part of that bay: propped on one elbow, I could look out at 4 a.m.—the fishing boats returning to Provincetown harbor, all thirteen of them, their lights a rope pulling toward shore. Their return was a clock chiming, a parent's key turning in the lock of childhood. At high tide, waves would break against the foundation of the building, so that even in the dark, even with eyes closed, I knew, as if something had shifted in my own blood and marrow, the bay was at flood. During hurricanes and gales, the Atlantic was shaken into

me, a vibration so deep—that boom, boom of fist against body bag when Marvin Hagler worked out at the Provincetown Inn the following fall—its percussions became part of my sleep, a disturbance of the flesh. Even after I left that apartment and Provincetown, even in Charlottesville and in those breathtaking absences of the Midwest, I could have sworn I felt it—the tide changing, the Atlantic heaving itself on Truro, Wellfleet, Race Point, the waist-high grass of Indiana prairie bending westward.

\* \* \*

I grew up in N.Y.C., where I learned to drift with crowds, to be one shining particle in those streaming currents of phosphorescence that merge and intersect around Fifth and Fifty-seventh, especially on late winter afternoons. As one sparkling corpuscle, I delighted in the speed, the thrust, even the bumps and jolts of all those other glittering corpuscles. Black, white, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, we made up one Amazonian bloodstream. In those crowds, I savored my anonymity, that deliciously sensuous private space where I could dream in public, sensing,

the outermost edges of other people's dreams: that woman striding past me in a green suede coat, lighting up a Mary J—the burned eggplant smell drifted back to me, spreading, smudging the purely olfactory calligraphy of her dream. Long after she disappeared into the crowded distance, her dream flowed from her nostrils, enigmatic, persistent.

In Provincetown, everyone seems to dream in public. The summer I lived in a studio at the west end, Georgie would stand in front of me as I sunbathed in the garden and dream out loud. We had moved into the cottage on the same day, Georgie in the studio below

gleaming ball, arms grasping ankles, or became a wheel, legs reaching back toward the head—all those intricate combinations of cat's cradle I played as a child, Georgie never tiring of the game, the knots never slipping through his fingers, but only through his heart: they were all "teddy bears" whose small bodies nestled against his chest. Georgie's lovers were contortionists, sexual acrobats, so that finally, for me, the image that represented them all was Picasso's "Femme Couche," with its simultaneous, all-embracing view of breasts, buttocks, and vaginal face. What Georgie dreamed out loud each morn-

clothespins, with holes for his eyes and mouth." What I never tired of were masks that opened to reveal still another mask: a dream inside a dream—or a dream with its own false bottom, the shock of mistaken identity. There was, for example, the Beautiful Lady mask from Italy, with her straight nose, thick mascaraed lashes, porcelain skin blushing at the cheeks—and a black chiffon scarf draped across the mouth. Unfasten the scarf: the mouth bloomed up a crimson gash, a gaping blood-smeared wound. The Beautiful Lady was so versatile, an alluring woman who, at the drop of a veil, could transform



mine. "Hi," he said, "I'm Georgie the Whore," the only name I ever knew him by. Midmorning, as I stirred silty coffee with a twig and watched black islands break loose from the sun, Georgie would read to me from the dream diaries clients had left with him, clients he usually met at Tuesday afternoon tea dances at one of the restaurants on Commercial Street. Georgie was a perfectionist who found ways to concretize down to the last detail his clients' amorphous yearnings for mingled pain and pleasure. But what Georgie loved to dream most was the male body. If he could have found a way, he would have entered through the anus and exited from the mouth, having traveled every tortuous channel of mazy entrails, as if love making, to be any good, had to reenact our births, the cry of orgasm recalling the glistening moment when we scream out our arrival on earth. How many times that summer I heard his clients arrive, four maybe five arrivals each night, the cars racing up, then falling back down the gravel driveway, as the men replaced one another, their cries always sounding somehow the same. As Georgie talked, the male body turned inside out or rolled into a

ing was sex as collage: every possible way of taking a man, fantasy superimposed on fantasy, maps and groundplans for fantastic cities of desire, the cities lapping and overlapping one another, each city with its own lymphatic network pumping, pulsating, spilling from fountain to baroque fountain.

Sometimes when a morning listening to Georgie made me feel too lethargic to write, I'd devote the afternoon to a small shop on Commercial Street that sold magic tricks and costumes. The magic tricks—hats that promised disappearance, rubber spiders quivering on black legs, glasses with false bottoms—were not what interested me: it was the masks, those rubber faces that fit over my own like a second, or a first, skin. There were animal masks—cat, gorilla, bear, and an odd one-of-a-kind fanged face that reminded me of Cocteau's dream animal for "Beauty and the Beast." The fanged face even came with a costume that swathed and engulfed the body in velvet. Masks are not to be put on frivolously. All through the filming of "Beauty and the Beast" Cocteau was so disfigured by eczema that he wore "a veil made of black paper, fastened to the brim of his hat with

herself into something hideous—or, depending on the viewer's taste, perhaps something more alluring. Beautiful Lady reminded me of the mask worn by the Echo Dancer in Kwakiutl winter ceremonies. When the Echo Dancer appears, he wears a mask bearing humanlike features. Moving around the fire, he covers his face with the corner of his blanket, then suddenly lets the covering drop to reveal a different mouthpiece on the mask. As the dance progresses, the performer displays a series of mouthpieces—animal, bird, sea creature. But the Beautiful Lady also brought to mind those Ovidian myths where the hunter is transformed into the victim—Actaeon changed into a stag, then torn to pieces by his own dogs, which mistake him for the animal he was pursuing. But unlike Actaeon, the Beautiful Lady had the ability to heal herself: only cover her mouth, and what was bloody and torn is made whole; cover her mouth, and whatever story she inspires can start over from its innocent beginning.

I approached the Beautiful Lady mask gingerly, with respect, but never tried it on. It was the King Kong hands that I loved to slip over my own like burglar's gloves, that



leathery black skin exchanging cells with mine: the gorilla hands were somewhat humanized by my gestures while some animal trace revived my body, electrifying each hair on my head. I have seen every one of the King Kong films, each refilming a reflection of some subtle change in our idea of the erotic. In the version that stars Jessica Lange, the essence of the heroine's sexuality is amnesia, her ability to forget each narrow escape as soon as it's over. As a result, she starts each adventure anew, fearless. When the geological team arrives on Kong's island, Jessica rushes ahead on the stony beach, despite the foreboding chill created by the ominously swirling mists. It's not a beach I would care to walk alone. But Jessica, ignorant of the cues that immediately alert the aficionado of the fantasy genre, senses no danger. Like the Beautiful Lady, she is self-healing, a perpetual virgin in the garden of fantasy sex.

\* \* \*

During the winter of 1979, as I read in front of a window overlooking Provincetown Bay, I often thought of Keats the reader: "I should like the window to open onto the Lake of Geneva," he wrote Fanny, "and there I'd sit and read all day, like the picture of somebody reading." Perhaps like those women looking out of windows in paintings by Caspar David Friedrich and M. V. Schwind that had such a vogue in the early and mid 1800s. Backs turned on the dark interiors that make up most of the pictorial space, these women seem to drift out of the paintings—not toward, but away from us, out over the horizon where our own thoughts are travelling. Painters of this period frequently portrayed themselves before windows, and there is even a painting, attributed to M. Drolling the elder, of a Paris interior (Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford) where the view through the open window is depicted on a canvas on the easel. Like these artists, like Keats looking out on Lake Geneva, I was simultaneously inside and outside, snug and far away, contained and dispersed as I sat by my window. The natural world with its gulls, sandpipers, boats, and winding windrows of kelp and seagrape intermingled with the poems and novels I read, such as in Spenser's Bower of Bliss living vines and tendrils entwine themselves around artificial plants. That strange long-drawn cry that Em-

ma Bovary hears after making love with Rudolphe, the cry that hangs on the air of Steegmuller's superb translation before it mingles with Emma's own jangled nerves seemed to come from out over the bay, the cry of a gull suddenly rising from the silence. The natural world flowed into, washed over, and nurtured whatever I read, dreamed, and wrote. I was a creature in a tidal pool, sometimes drinking the incoming waves at flood, other times breathing air and that extraordinary Provincetown light that always comes from several directions at once—bouncing off the bay, raining down through the skylight, crackling out of the wood stove. I was a straddler, inhabiting a world of art prolonged by dream and a natural world guided by some deeper dream. On sunny, surprisingly warm December afternoons, I sipped margaritas at the Red Inn, and as the sun set, licked salt from the rim of the ocean. This was my third year in Provincetown. No longer a fellow at the Fine Arts Work Center, I stayed on with a grant from the Artists Foundation, sometimes sharing the sunset with two other former fellows, a sculptor and a painter. What I remember now were our long, impassioned talks about Nancy Holt, whose "Sun Tunnels," constructed during the Seventies in Utah's Great Basin Desert, invited us to meditate on inside and outside, sensations from within the body and perceptions sucked in through openings in the tunnels and pipes. Late at night, when the moon loomed, an enormous floating city that illuminated whatever I was reading, I thought of the moon penetrating Holt's tunnels, the different shapes that light takes as it encroaches on darkness. Even when I read in the bath, glass of scotch beside the soap, I could sense the lunar tug, the pull the moon exerted on the bay, on the syrupy undulations of the waterbed, on the water I bathed in. On the stereo, John Anderson slurred "Going Down Hill," the moon dragging at his vocal cords, thickening the sound.

Late at night, I drifted through all the apartments I had ever lived in: the little apartment on the Rue du Cherche Midi that looked down on a cobblestone courtyard that gleamed on chill, wet October nights; the hotel room in Paris, its windows opening onto a garden of blossoming pear trees—my home for a year, it also looked into another room where each

night a man and woman made love without bothering to draw the curtains; the pink stucco apartment that looked out on Porto Cervo where a harbor vendor sold bright orange roe of sea urchins, the sticky tickertape of history I gulped down with lemon and the rough burn of Sardinian Vernaccia, future urchin beds swallowed whole; the balcony in N.Y.C. that looked down on swaying barges of light, hanging bridges, neon gardens floating miraculously thirty stories above the street; the dark blue tiles of the apartment overlooking Positano, cool under bare feet, the *persiani* half closed on hot afternoons, the ocean boiling at the cliff bottom, sizzling, breeze of garlic and onion. Through the window at Provincetown I looked out through all those other windows, the window in Paris opening to reveal the window in Porto Cervo, which opened wide to reveal the balcony in N.Y.C.—as if I were pulling a spy glass to its furthest extension. Or as if the windows opened onto each other like those stories in the *Arabian Nights* that do not really end, but, instead, spill into one another, story overflowing into story, until I am standing in the garden at Positano where Danish's cat has just given birth to the rhythm of "Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club." The rooster crows and dawn arrives with the smell of lemon and mimosa. The rooster knows the exact moment. All roosters everywhere know the moment. In Provincetown, it's conch pink, slippery, the thin line that separates night from day, the exact moment when morning appears like a sail on the horizon. Such thresholds have always seemed magical to me, those fine threads of the world that have the power to renew us if we can only grab hold of them: the flicker of light that appears between bands of color in Rothko's paintings, that marginal world, the dividing line, the moment of change when everything still seems possible. Once, walking near Pilgrim Heights, I tried to follow the shrill of peepers to its source, that spring where the sound wells up and spills into rivulets of water. Louder and louder the shrilling grew—and then, just when I had almost found its source, the shrilling stopped, all the peepers holding their breath at once. So the source is secret, magical, withholding itself, retreating into what Mallarme called the "last spiritual casket."

It was at Pilgrim Heights that William Bradford and an exploring party from the

"Mayflower" had their first drink of American water. Before going on to Plymouth and founding our nation on rock, the Pilgrims first tried to found it on water in Provincetown Harbor. It was in Provincetown Bay that the women of the Mayflower washed their clothes after the long crossing. And it was in Provincetown Bay that Bradford's wife, Anne, in a state of despair, drowned herself. You will not find her mentioned in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, though William's career is summarized there. You will not find her suicide mentioned in Bradford's chronicle, *The History of Plymouth Plantation*: not a ripple of her passing disturbs his account of the Pilgrim venture. Within the fullness of the first Thanksgiving there is this absence, Anne's: within the desire to build, to construct, to found, to create something new, this tug in the opposite direction, this desire not to begin, not to, not to—the secret absence out of which all great things start up.

I have visited the spring where supposedly Bradford and his exploring expedition had their first taste of "sweet water." The first time alone, the second time with Otukwei Okai, a poet from Ghana in residence at the Fine Arts Work Center. This was my second year as a fellow, the spring of 1979. The car I had bought the previous year still smelled new, and its shiny black exterior had not yet lost its sex appeal. Every afternoon, Otukwei passed the car, patted the hood, and said something complimentary, until finally it dawned on me: he wanted us to go for a drive and fulfill his version of the American dream—fast car, loud rock, hamburgers, shakes and fries, and all the windows open. It seemed so clichéd to me, this dream, but well, why not do it?—especially since my own myth of Africa was probably just as hackneyed: tawny lions, as marvelously unreal as Rousseau's, creeping up on villagers. My pleas for lion stories invariably reduced Otukwei to frowning silence. The day I satisfied his dream down to the last greasy fried potato, Otukwei, his wife Beatrice, and their infant daughter, swaddled in pink, drove with me to Pilgrim Heights for our own taste of the famous spring. Along the way, Otukwei and I spilled out ideas for poems, our creative juices keeping pace with the rock music, the membranes of our foetal poems so thin that images swam back and forth between us. It was one enormous poem we were writing as

we got out of the car and walked the spongy forest trail covered with amber needles to a high place that looks down on the water, which barely seems to move between banks of yellow-brown reeds. An egret shuddered up, its flight hardly faster than the river's. The air was redolent of pine. It was here, supposedly, that the Pilgrims saw footprints made by local Native Americans. I spared Otukwei my skepticism about the role of this particular spring in American history and simply knelt with him: it tasted as before—warm, sandy. On the drive back to Provincetown, suddenly out of the flow of conversation, it erupted—Otukwei's lion story. A very large lion. The men carrying it on a pole back to the village, its tail so long it dragged in the dust.

\* \* \*

Recently, on a flight to West Palm Beach, as a south wind carried wave after wave of rain against the windows, I felt it again, the deep boom of Provincetown Bay slapping at foundations, sucking its breath in, holding it, holding it, then heaving it out. We were threading our way between storm systems in an eerie yellow-green light, the wake of a passing tornado. Bouldery clouds, stacked precariously on one another, trembled, stretching, towering higher and higher above the plane, then suddenly toppled, the plane falling with them as if through a trap door. I had entered the realm of process, where sky-ing was all that mattered. To the left, racing us, was a thick black cloud, flat as a mattress,

(Continued on page 120)

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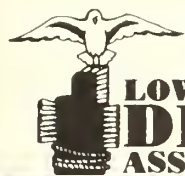
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# THE RENAISSANCE OF WELDON KEEES

By James Reidel

The figure of the poet before a work of art is a less meddlesome interruption of the spectator's view than a welcome presence, for the poet, as one of its more adept interpreters, has had a longstanding relationship to visual art. Although a tradition reaches further back than "Ode On A Grecian Urn," those of us who felt that it was enough to follow Keats as he made his circumspection will understand the "figure of the poet" not as a teaching assistant running a slide projector, but rather as a companion of our imaginations.

Today poetry "suggested" by trips to galleries has become a genre, in spite of the academicism of the forties and fifties that made poems based on Renaissance paintings quaint anachronisms—useful as exercises for writing students. However, in 1974, John Ashbery's "Self-Portrait In A Convex Mirror" used Parmigianino's painting not as merely a focal point but as a range of foci that functioned as a mirror. To some degree, Ashbery's most important poem is didactic, for it instructs us to see the significance of a work of art by reducing all criteria to the "whole" of the spectator: "The hand [that] holds no chalk and the work that 'cannot know it knew, except/Here and there, in cold pockets/Of remembrance.'" This is what Carolyn Forché has called "the entropy of interpretation"—the revelation that all exegesis is reduced to the self at the moment it consumes a work of art.

Poets have also been, of course, critics of art, Ashbery, again, comes to mind, but a far

more romantic figure is the poet Weldon Kees, who represents an anomaly in the tradition, for he had a hand that "held chalk," and brushes, as well. A member of the avant-garde of the forties and fifties, Kees was one of the "Irascibles," though he does not appear in their 1951 *Life* group portrait. It is not as if he had been air-brushed out of art history; his neglect is the product of his own disengagement from what we normally expect of an artist's career.

Weldon Kees was born in the small, agricultural and industrial city of Beatrice, Nebraska, in 1914, a time of the birth of an important generation of American poets who would inherit the legacy of *The Waste Land*. During his brief but productive literary career, Kees wrote three books of verse and a number of short stories. He also wrote copy for Paramount's newsreel service and turned out cultural essays for *Time*, *The Nation*, *Partisan Review*, and other magazines. In 1951, he worked as a behavioral science researcher under Gregory Bateson and Jurgen Ruesch. With the latter he co-authored *Nonverbal Communication*, for which Kees contributed photographs and an essay on schizophrenic art.

It was on July 18, 1955, following a long, traumatic separation from his wife, that *The New Republic* printed a review by Kees entitled "How To Be Happy: Installment 1053," in which he described "our present atmosphere of mistrust, violence, and irrationality, with so many human beings murdering themselves—either literally or symbolically. . . ." That same day, Kees's car, with his Langley Porter Psychiatric Institute lab coat neatly folded on the front seat, was found

abandoned on an approach ramp to the Golden Gate Bridge. Every indication that he had jumped to his death was present except for his body. The rumor that he had disappeared to Mexico started with him, but everyone who heard it heard the other option of suicide, too.

Kees's sculpture, which his letters indicate was made up of "found" objects, has not survived. What is left of oeuvre—the paintings and the collages, dispersed by the poet's father, a retired hardware manufacturer who gave his son's pictures away as mementos—exists in a few institutions and private collections; nonetheless, Kees was the kind of artist whose life suggests an importance that needs neither a large body of work nor a sizable reputation to sustain it.

Kees arrived at painting out of a sense that delimiting himself as a writer was to fall into an existential trap he saw as an indication of a sick culture. His attitude may have been appropriated from T.S. Eliot's essay, "Notes Toward A Definition Of Culture," in which Eliot argued that the "artistic sensibility is impoverished by its separation from the religious sensibility, the religious by its separation from the artistic." Kees, like other poets who admired Eliot while disregarding his Anglo-Catholicism as a tergiversation from the Waste-Land-ethos, seems to have adapted this argument by replacing religion with other arts.

Another indication of Kees's motives for taking up painting can be found, coincidentally, in the same issue of *Partisan Review* where

enlisted Kees to devise his first piece of art criticism: the note for a printed announcement of a Byron Browne exhibition indicates a mature criterion, one that not only valued the image, but the act of painting, an act that translated, for Kees, into the pleasure of seeing the operation of an original imagination. And it seems that Kees could not resist knowing this pleasure in a manner few critics ever know it. One of his friends, the artist Romare Beardon, reported: "On one visit to Weldon's I noticed a painting above the sofa. I asked him who had done it. He knew so many painters, I assumed it was a gift; so I was surprised when he told me that he indeed was the artist."

By 1948, Kees had left Paramount so that he could devote more time to painting and writing. Some of his pictures were certainly done in Provincetown, where he summered with Hans Hofmann's entourage. Although Kees was not a student of Hofmann's, he must have benefited from his contact with the German-born artist who was such a crucial influence in the making of an American avant-garde. Kees, in fact, assisted Hofmann in the English-language versions of statements on his teaching and aesthetics.

Later in the same year, Kees had his first one-man exhibition at the Peridot Gallery, one of the important outlets, along with the Kootz Gallery and Betty Parsons, of Abstract Expressionist art. Subsequently, Kees's work would be represented in the Whitney annuals for 1949 and 1950. And his work appeared in the smaller, more provocative group exhibitions that often signaled a new trend. For example, Kees was included in the "Black Or White" show put on by the Kootz Gallery. His name on the exhibition's printed announcement makes it possible to associate him with de Kooning, Motherwell, Mondrian, and Dubuffet. Such documentation, like an apocryphal relic, makes it doubly perplexing that Kees's name has been omitted from this group since 1950. And what could be stranger than the appearance of his obscure American poet among figures from the international art elite except that during this period Kees assumed *The Nation's* art column that his friend, Clement Greenberg, had given up.

Although very few of Kees's works are extant (their repositories range from the University of Nebraska's small fine-arts museum to a four-room, post-war era, Cape Cod house in a suburb of New Haven), a few, careful appraisals can be made. While some of Kees's works may seem derivative, they derive from the same sources tapped by the Abstract Expressionists recognized today: Picasso, the European surrealists, emigres like Mondrian,

and transitional figures like Arshile Gorky. There is some debt or Miro, from whom Kees adapted delicate, rather sculptural forms; many of Kees's paintings from the New York period impress the viewer with this aspect of sculpture, for they seem like balancing acts whose curvilinear shapes suggest Calder's. Last, we find the presence of Klee in Kees's figurative images. Given his insightful appraisal of Robert Motherwell in *Magazine Of Art*, Kees may have thought the "image" of the materials was a higher criterion: "In Motherwell . . . a new kind of subject matter becomes manifest. It is paint itself. The paintings are quite simply 'about' paint." (It should not be lost that Kees is one of the few critics who understood the praxis of what he was writing about.)

Kees did not, however, sterilize the content of his pictures of human concerns or of social commentary. In contrast to the works of his friend, William Baziot, the one "science" painting attributed to Kees is not a celebration of flora and fauna preserved at the Museum of Natural History. Instead, it is composed of a stick figure, a displaced "eye," and a cutout of a newspaper photo-illustration of what could be tree bark or sedimentary rock formations—a naturalistic image that implies a deliberate uncertainty. Juxtaposed to the figure is another piece of newsprint, a table of chemical elements. Dated "1946," the painting-collage could be a protest against a post-war, technocratic chauvinism that had hegemony over the public's imagination—the

Eliot's piece appears. In an omnibus review of little magazines, Kees betrays the feeling common among his generation's writers—that they did not measure up to their predecessors: "There is a good deal to be said against the intellectual product of the twenties; yet those writers who established themselves in that period, and who still exist, reminding us occasionally of creatures from another age—cumings, Eliot, Stevens, Williams, etc.—remain our most gifted avant-garde contributors. The competition from those who followed is a sporadic affair only. If that was a Wasteland [sic] and they were the Lost Generation, then what is this moldy milieu in which we find ourselves; and what are we?" If Kees posed a problem for himself, then its solution seems to have lain outside of an exclusively literary career. And when he wrote this in 1944, there was a milieu beginning to form—artists and their advocates, the new gallery-owners, and critics who saw themselves as the new wave of an American art.

Whether Kees began to write about painting and then to paint, or just the opposite, is uncertain. In 1946, his modest efforts in both areas began to appear. From the time he arrived in New York in 1943, he was exposed to the new theories of painting. In fact, he lived in the same building as Harold Rosenberg. And the small parties and informal gatherings in bars, coffee shops, and cafeterias influenced Kees's gravitation toward the Abstract Expressionists. Samuel Kootz's gallery even

consummation of the well-advertized illusion that the wonders of science—not people—had won the war. Having seen and resented the dehumanizing effect of this, Kees took the chemical table, the kind that appeared in popular scientific articles and high school textbooks of the period, and pasted it upside down. This "repositioning" changes what the table is communicating. Now the table frees the viewer from science's public relations mission: to reassure by condescendingly oversimplifying a world that is vastly more inexplicable, more mysterious.

After 1950, this kind of satire seems to disappear, as it did from his later poems. Donald Justice, in his introduction to Kees's *Collected Poems*, writes that "Kees is one of the bitterest poets in history." Although Kees probably intended no link between his poetry and his painting, the dark, heavily textured canvases rendered in cinereous non-colors seem to parallel the voice of nihilism in Kees's last book, *Poems 1947-1954*.

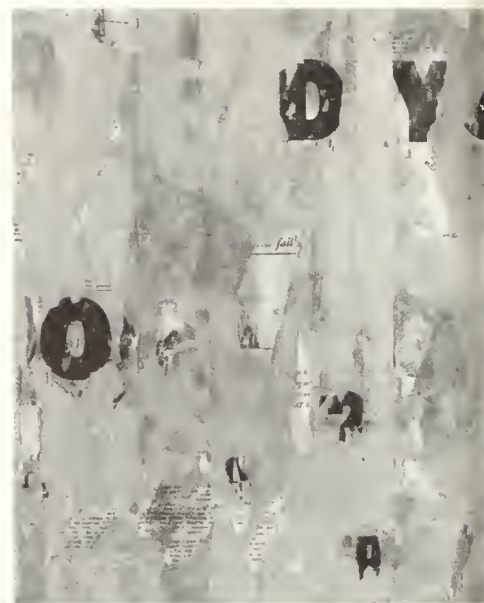
That voice differs astonishingly from the one a *Brooklyn Eagle* reporter quoted on the eve of Kees's first one-man show in November 1948, when Kees emphasized painting's life-affirming effects—as if painting had liberated him from the limitations of his literary work: "I believe that painting and writing complement one another. Shifting from one to the other I don't get into the periods of absolute sterility that are often experienced by writers who just write, or painters who just paint. No doubt the majority of painters and writers could turn to either medium if they liked. Most of them, I think, are forced by society to do one thing, and consequently, in some cases, they become narrower and narrower. They get over-specialized. They're in a trap and they can't get out."

Kees found "the change from writing to painting a joyous, spontaneous experience," for the experience of painting seemed to correct the balkanization of the arts, a "sickness" that he imagined like this: "I never read anything," says the painter. "I don't see what the painters today are up to," says the novelist." He believed that the cultural malaise of the period lay in the collapse of a dialogue between the arts and in works of art. That this belief reflected the influence of European existentialism, as well as Eliot's Angst, is apparent in Kees's poem, "The Hourglass":

*Being at the expense of Becoming.  
Becoming at the expense of Being.  
The statue's head falls off, suggesting  
That ideal forms may be non-temporal.  
Tide covers the sand.*

*What transcends Becoming  
Can never be reached by Becoming.  
Regard the higher and higher forms  
Continually perfecting themselves.  
Under the door, dust, and the north wind.*

It could be argued that Kees's antipathy to specialization—his desire for existential elbowroom—was rectified on the test-bed of





JUDITH ROTHSCHILD, FRITZ BULTMAN & WELDON KEES

his brief career: a dangerous and eventually catastrophic experiment in which Kees may have come to understand that "ideal forms may be non-temporal."

Ironically, Kees's virtuosity was neither thought nor acted out with expectations that his work would survive, for Kees was obsessed with how little of the art of his generation seemed capable of endurance. In 1950, the leading Abstract Expressionists challenged the Metropolitan Museum of Art's selection policy for an exhibition of recent American art. In a letter, printed in Kees's last art column for *The Nation*, a letter that Kees himself signed, Jackson Pollock, Hans Hofmann, Adolph Gottlieb, Mark Rothko, and ten other prominent artists refused to submit work to "the monster national exhibition" and claimed "only advanced art has made any consequential contribution to civilization": this letter eventually became known as the "Irascible

manifesto." "For the first time," wrote Weldon Kees at the end of the column, "avant-garde painters in this country have taken a united position against the Academy; this is their historical role; the Academy itself drew the lines." The letter resulted in a polemical victory over the Metropolitan, attracted the media, notably *Life*, established Abstract Expressionism as America's "modern" art, and fixed the reputations of its "masters."

Kees, however, did not stay in New York to be *documented* as one of the official Irascibles in *Life*'s picture-taking session. In part responsible for this photograph, Kees resented the effects of fame in letters he no longer mailed out of New York, but from addresses scattered around San Francisco Bay. Although he did not stop painting and would have another one-man exhibition of his collages in New York in 1953, Kees strangely

disengaged himself from his milieu that ranged from the Algonquin Club to the Cape. At a time when he wrote about a "historical role" for himself, he chose to be a transient figure in the New York art scene—perhaps because he already had another vision of the artist's historical role, of the artist who had fallen from modernism's shining path; his disillusion may have had its source in his generation of deflated literati. In his January 1950 column, Kees had written "from under" his Irascible bad faith that "the atmosphere in art circles, here in New York at least, seems increasingly grayer, a good deal emptier than in years, and charged with stasis . . . The torpor and despondency that have pervaded literary circles for some time seem to have widened their area of saturation." In the same piece, Kees anticipated Tom Wolfe's caricature of the Abstract Expressionist in *The Painted* (Continued on page 120)



HANS HOFFMAN, KARL KNATHS, WELDON KEES, CECIL HEMLEY & FRITZ BULTMAN photo: Bill Will

# WELDON KEES:

## ENEMY OF MEDIOCRITY



By Fritz Bultman

The qualities that I would like most to evoke about Weldon Kees are his sense of clarity, of affirmation, of moving on with the real situation and with the positive values at hand. It was not that he enjoyed being busy; he too could sit on the beach in those summers, but if he could see something clear and positive and creative, he would do everything in his power to hasten its success. This generosity of spirit had its roots in his energy and health and, coupled with his wit and imagination, made his end a real loss for all of us who counted him a valued friend.

It was in such generosity of spirit that he wrote me about an American Abstract Arts show in 1949. It was a note on an announcement of another show that was being held at the Peridot Gallery, and it says that we are hung side by side (in this American Abstract Artists show) and that he thought I had the best painting in the show. Such acts of encouragement and self-abnegation are very few in the so-called "art world" and this was typical of Weldon in that important moment of art ferment.

Nineteen-forty-nine and 1950 are the years most clear to me in my memories of Weldon,

though I had met him the year before, first with Bill Baziotis and then again at the Hans Hofmanns' for dinner—there was an immediate spark of mutual interests. I was living and painting year round in Provincetown during those years, and the sense of the larger world that Weldon carried with him was very tonic and helpful in dispelling the perplexities of country living (with a family of small children). He had a way of clearing the atmosphere by calling everything not only by its right name, but by its clearest name. Put in simpler terms, Weldon made me aware of the trap that bucolic family life held for an artist—in my case, an artist for whom he had respect. This respect came from a few paintings of mine that he had seen in a Provincetown gallery, and the idea of being sought out because of my work was intensely flattering. But Weldon never flattered: it was an invitation to join in the good fight against mediocrity and to try to clear up some of the fuzzy-headed values that are always being passed off as profundities in this country, in this world.

This exhibition of Weldon's paintings coming now in 1979 is fitting, as it is the 30th an-

niversary of Weldon's and my first "culture venture," *Forum '49*, in Provincetown. Weldon saw it as an "entertainment" for summer, and it embraced many of our mutual interests. The exhibition of Post-Abstract painting that opened the series of evenings was an innovation that was followed in New York for many years with the Stable Annuals, the Young Artists shows, etc. The young committee that formed *Forum '49* was Weldon Kees, Cecil Hemley, the poet-editor, and Karl Knaths. This first exhibition was more improvised than planned. We asked a few New York dealers for pictures, Betty Parsons among others, we invited every local painter whose work was abstract to participate, and we gave a special extended show to modern Provincetown painters of an older generation, Blanche Lazelle, Agnes Weinrich, Oliver Chaffee, and Ambrose Webster. Lazelle was still alive; the others, deceased. We cast our net widely and succeed in waking up a town that had been content to swim and cocktail and paint quietly. Our announced program of "evenings" covered all the arts, including architecture, and in the end, though the dance  
(Continued on page 118)



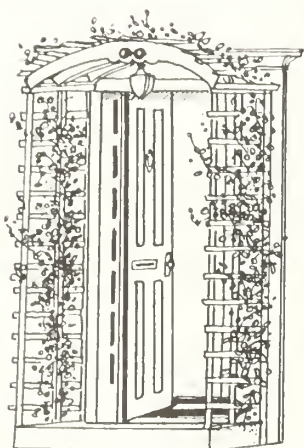
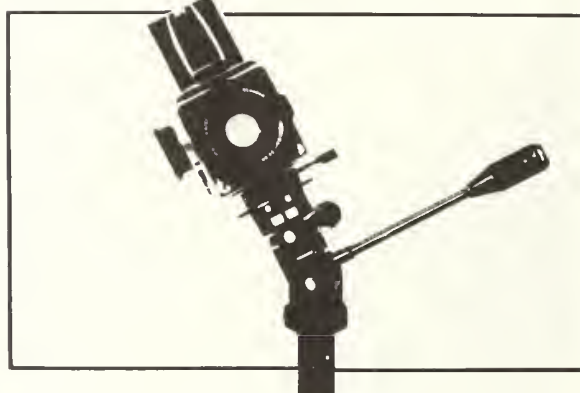
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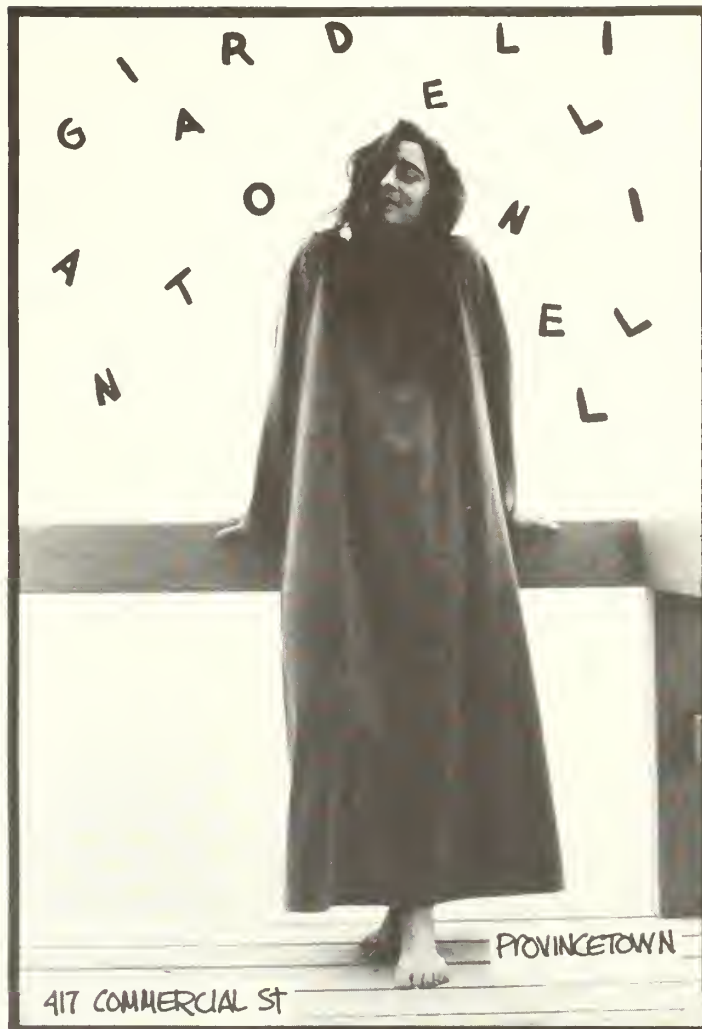
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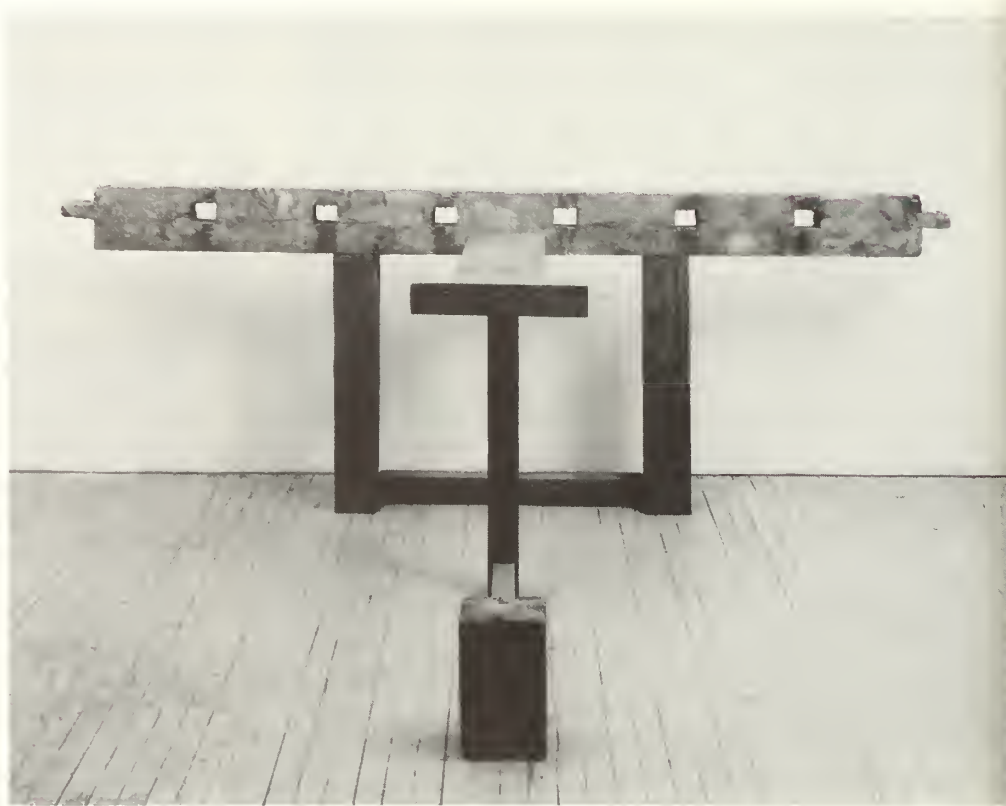
## BUDD HOPKINS ON SCULPTURE & UFO S

*A Conversation with April Kingsley*

Yes, I am his wife, but this interview provided a chance to step out of our conjugal roles and go back to our premarital ones of artist and critic. Formal occasions to be analytical don't present themselves often. Here we had an opportunity to sit down on the beach, without ringing phones or meals being prepared, and just discuss the work. When you share a workspace with an artist for years, watching the work develop on a daily basis, you end up knowing too much about it in some respects, and not nearly enough in others. You know the facts, but not the feelings; the moves, but not the ideas behind them. It could be said that a critic in that position understands method and effect rather than operative cause, which doesn't do a whole lot of good for either the artist or the art audience. I have witnessed numerous sculptures "coming together" under Budd's hands; I have even "found" some of the units that eventually wound up in his pieces. I knew how he made them, but not why—and these works *are* decidedly mysterious presences about which one does want to know why. What do they mean? I have also been close to the developments in his UFO research, which parallel, both in time and in certain aesthetic respects, his artistic development into three dimensions. In all of this, it wasn't until we sat down to do this interview that either Budd or I began to get a grasp on the work as a whole aesthetic statement.

**April Kingsley:** Nineteen-seventy-eight was the year you started writing your first book concerning UFO abductions, *Missing Time*, and it was also when you began "Hera's Wall," the first of the *Temple*, *Altar*, and *Guardian* complexes.

**Budd Hopkins:** There's probably no direct connection except that both were major steps forward for me. But in the *Temples*, one of the main issues was the reflected light and the charged space it made on the wall. This light

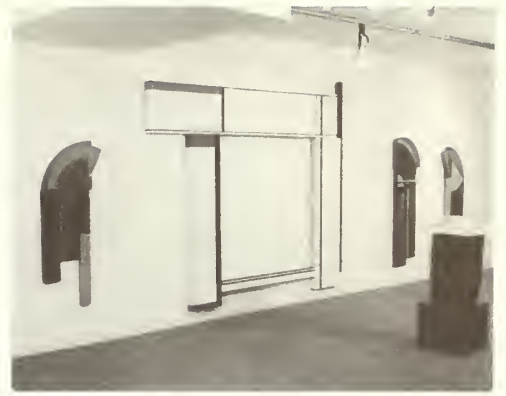


"HORIZONTAL ALTAR" 1985

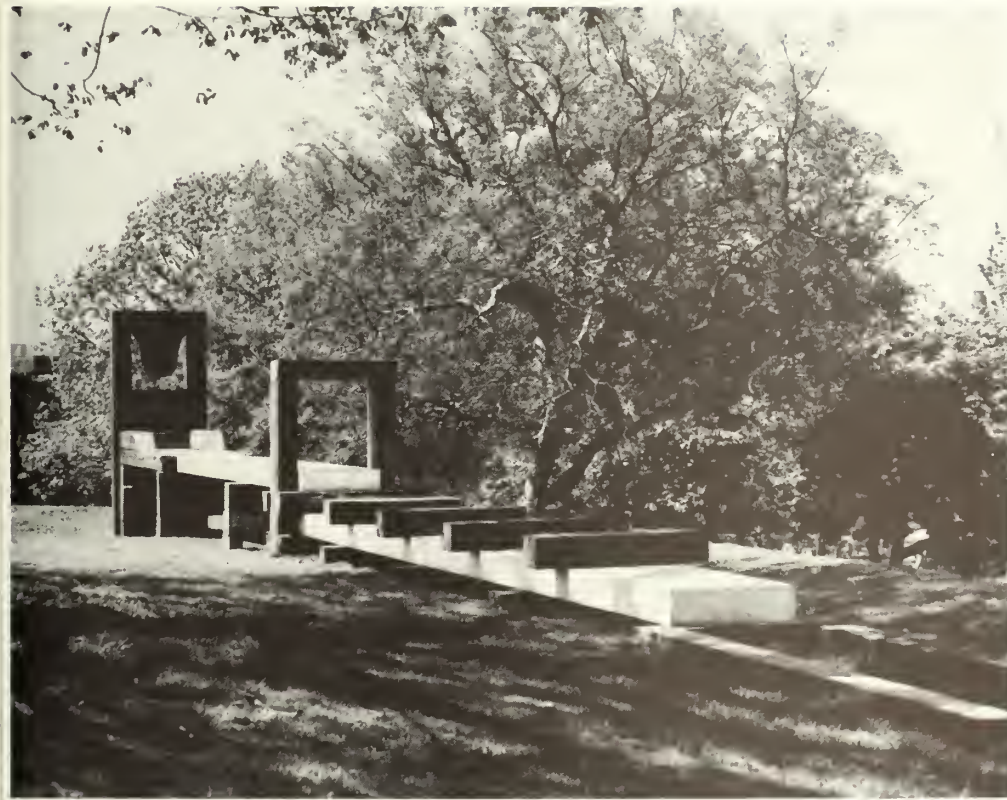
space was central to my thinking, as was the fact that the center had to be a perfect square, symmetrically flanked. The use of reflected light at the heart of the piece was a major step away from having the object, the painted surface carry all the meaning. Earlier paintings like "Mahler's Castle" had ironic force and function. The object itself contained the meaning; the magic was in the painted surface. In "Hera's Wall" and the later *Temples* the negative space is the most highly charged area. There's a parallel here with the work of James Turrell, who's also very intrigued with UFOs. One can talk about his work in terms of perceptual play, but if you look at it emo-

tionally, then his work can be seen as creating magic places with indiscernible light sources. The difference between Turrell's light and Dan Flavin's is that Flavin, with his visible fluorescent tubes, shows both cause and effect. Turrell masks the light source, thereby showing only effect and mystifying the cause. He charges the space through the light, so his work is ultimately more involved with mystery than with process. The process is concealed, unlike the literalism of so much Minimal art. I feel infinitely closer to Turrell, obviously, than to Flavin.

**AK:** The *Guardian* paintings, perhaps because of their irregular silhouettes, also seem open



HERA'S WALL PARTIAL VIEW 1978



RITUAL BRIDGE 1983

rather than closed, partial or intermediary rather than complete, and iconic despite their personage-like aspects.

**BH:** True. The silhouettes of the *Guardian* paintings point toward a place of magic—the charged center of the *Temple*—rather than containing magic in themselves.

**AK:** You once said you found the *Guardian* image by playing around with the scraps of arcs and segments left over from cutting out the circles in the collage studies for your paintings, so I guess their somewhat provisional quality is basic to them. I know you see them as units in a procession. At least that is how you used them in "Sacred Spaces," where you

set up visual congruencies between them and the winged warriors on Assyrian reliefs or the three kingly figures in the right foreground of Piero della Francesca's "Flagellation." But it seems to me that they also can stand alone quite successfully.

**BH:** Even when they are alone they remain directional, directing your gaze one place rather than another. In the context of the *Temples*, the *Guardians* point to something that is not a painted surface.

**AK:** If anything, their colorfulness makes a connection past the white or neutral colors of the *Temples* to the colored light within their confines. The *Temples* then evolved into the

early freestanding sculptures, retaining painted areas within the context of natural wood, something that no longer happens.

**BH:** But still the sculptures, starting with the large, outdoor "Ritual Bridge," instead of being icon-like objects containing magic, are settings for ritual. They're loci for some sort of action to take place. In the "Ritual Bridge" the most highly charged place was the red-lined opening in the upright through which one sighted the twin-towers of Manhattan. As with the *Temples*, the most charged thing again is the negative space—the hole and not the donut, you might say. When I started the smaller *Altar* sculptures, the most important fact about them was their sense of being objects with a function, furniture for a ritual, rather than objects to be worshipped, like a crucifix or a totem. They were literally "place"—empty-top tables for some unknown rites. These empty surfaces are like the open squares in the *Temples*. I can't tolerate someone putting something on the altar surface any more than Turrell can tolerate someone actually walking into one of his perceptual spaces.

**AK:** There is however a crucial difference between the two of you in your stress on the rough wood you use and his dematerialization of the piece's physicality.

**BH:** I'm interested in the spread from the homely physical look of the work to the refined mystery that it supports. The emotional experience I want the work to provide is not physically self-contained, but rather an implied passage from the profane to the sacred. In the "Ritual Bridge," in particular, I wanted a sense of a rite of passage, whereas in a work by Turrell one is often confronted by a closed-off and intrinsically complete ethereal experience. I like the vulnerability and physicality of the wood supporting an ethereal experience. The fact that the wood is old and weathered literally conveys the notion of pass-  
(Continued on page 122)

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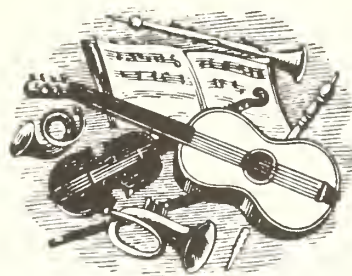
We've accumulated a lot of things, memories, and, obviously, satisfied customers over the past 150 years. There is bakery equipment from Uncle Clarence, a large assortment of whaling apparatus left from the Cooks, a Charles Hawthorne oil painting that came with the store, and rescue equipment from our old trucks that were converted into ambulances during World War II.

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Myron Stout, who was born in 1908, began keeping a journal in 1950, which he continued through 1966. Altogether, he wrote about 1,000 pages. In 1980, the Whitney Museum of American Art honored him with a major retrospective. He lives year round in Provincetown.

Undated, perhaps 1950

Advice, heart of the matter.

The shape of a broken eggshell, the smell of a damp place, the sight of a rag in the gutter, the feel of the touch of some surface, the sound of someone saying a single word, a word itself and alone, what you tasted when you licked your lips a certain day at a certain place: it's not just that these feelings have become single facts in your existence. There's not a one which exists alone; there's some strange and inexpressible set of relationships. They are tied together in such an intertwining maze of knots and loopings over and under, that not even the greatest patience could ever trace their directions. It is out of this dim and vague, this confused and almost chaotic world, that our intuitions of new concepts grow. Bypassing our conscious thinking, so to speak, they reach out into a still dimmer world.

It is only when consciousness has caught up with intuition, when it has given an almost material form to that which was certainly almost wholly immaterial, when it has brought it into the light, that the new conception is a conception. Our particular goals are the new conception: our goals are not places to be reached; they are ideas to be brought to birth.

2/52

Statement of a Non-Objective Artist

That many painters today paint in new terms—without, that is, using the traditional symbols of reality—is not surprising. Science is proving to us our great capacity for ever-new and expanding conceptions of the universe and ourselves. Yet, while we find it comparatively easy to absorb and utilize (to some extent, anyway) our increased scientific knowledge, the thing we find difficult is to adjust ourselves deeply—in the spirit—to a world so new, which presents us with such tremendously expanded possibilities, both for good and for evil. There are those, however, of great spirit who can project themselves beyond the obvious and confusing immediate and who can then, through exercise of their very special and great powers, find the truths in those visions and translate them into our world of actualities. It is they who have shaped and are shaping the progress of our world; and it is they who show us what we can yet do.

They have not been afraid to shift their viewpoint, and to look at what had been held to be the "final realities" from fresh viewpoints. It was only in this way, for instance, that it was found that there is not just one system of geometry—but that there are possibly *N* useful systems of geometry; and that it was possible to discover not just what

# M Y R O N

## S E L E C T I O N S F R O M

the microscope and telescope could reveal to the eye but, by projecting an infinity of possibilities *beyond* what the eye could see, find a microcosmos and a macrocosmos even millions of times greater and richer than at first conceived.

The Non-Objective painter paints without the traditional reference to nature, but he does this *not* to avoid nature or to run away from it (as so many think). Because *nature in today's experience is so tremendously expanded* that the *old terms have become inadequate*, he seeks



UNTITLED 1959-79

terms more adequate to his enlarged conceptions. It is out of this need and out of his enlarged experience that the new terms come.

He works with paint on canvas to evolve what might, for lack of better words, be called systems of living, dynamic relationships—systems, that is, more in the philosophical sense, images, perhaps, of the cosmos as he feels and knows it. The emotional impact of colors—the dance of their living quality on canvas, whether with quiet restraint or with the full play of their forces—are the elements he works with; and when he can so combine

them rightly, organically together that they possess that quality of evoking our innermost responses to our world and times, he has painted a painting—and created a work of art.

10/17/5?

There is one thing in particular that I learned through [Hans] Hofmann that, again and again, proves its value: the necessity of keeping in direct touch with nature. For someone with the tendency towards abstraction that I have, this is very important. I see so often how my work becomes sterile through an over concern with the abstraction and loses touch with the *thing*—the original visual impetus. When a painting "begins to die," it is doing exactly that—it is losing its connection with life, with reality. It has lost touch with its source in nature.

I have so often pondered on just what the connection between nature and my paintings consists of. I know that they invariably start with a *sensation*, a sensation of color, a sensation of movement. They are usually, in fact always so far as I am aware, from some particular sensation, touched off by a certain situation or sets of circumstances. In the "red" painting [R.B. Baker Collection], for instance, the color sensation had been building up for several summers in Provincetown—the colors of the little flower beds, the crimson of the large poppies, the oranges and yellow—oranges of the little ones—the high hollyhocks, the roses, all so vivid in the luminous Provincetown atmosphere that they burn themselves into one's vision. In 1949 I had attempted it and failed, had scraped it out and painted a painting, in violet shades, of forms more like interacting long, triangular blades (which was also a failure).

When I actually started what became the red painting, though two years later, I started drawing on the canvas, still wanting and feeling the flower colors, but now more set in green. The drawing that I began on the canvas, came not from any remembered form of flowers or flower beds, but from a tree outside the door; a tree with the thin foliage of the lower reaches allowing the rising branches to be seen, rising, yet moving sideways,

# S T O U T

## THE ARTIST'S JOURNALS

toward each other, coming in contact, reversing the moment, yet still rising. This horizontal movement, though on a slow and quite majestic scale, was on the same principle as the illusion that is created in a skip of the "Charleston," where the hands are placed on the knees and changed from one knee to the other each time the knees come together in doing the step. You see the same thing in a mowing blade when one set of teeth is moved back and forth across another set of teeth. You sense the same interchange of position, of the parts, but not being able to identify that movement in each particular part, you have only a sensation of a constantly contained, but constantly opposing, movement.

There is a similar kind of illusion in the revolving barber pole—only vertical. The movement is from bottom to top, and the beginning movement at the bottom is apparently fed by the ending of the movement at the top. The end feeds the beginning, establishing a cycle that is seemingly visually complete within the object, yet implies a completion outside the object. It's like we might feel that a "day," beginning at sunrise, is not complete until the following sunrise; one day is ending, another is beginning, all in one process. The cycle thus made, and the period implied (by the sunrise, by the arrival of the red stripe on the barber pole at the top while another begins at the bottom), is a purely relative thing—perhaps even illusory. For your period can be marked at any point along the process: the day at 10:33 in the morning, on the barber pole 7 ¾" from the bottom. In a painting it is the same way. You can begin "seeing" a painting at any point in the painting or out, for that matter, and the painting will, in just the same way, lead you throughout its extent back to the same point. Similarly, you can sense the whole of the horizontal movement or the vertical movement, just as you can sense east and west, north and south. Also, you can sense things close and near (or, more important, movement toward and movement away from you), yet all of these sensations have their cyclic effect; there is always at least an implied completion through the balance of opposites. The cycle

is completed when, having been drawn "farthest away from," we feel the pull of "nearest to," and at some point we find our direction reversed, and ourselves moving back toward where we started.

6/4/53

What is the substance of what we see? We reach for it with every stroke of the brush. When the dunes were so beautiful last month, the wild cherry, a massive—yet so light—drift of white, color without apparent substance, not just layered over them, but being of them,



"AEGIS" 1955-79

yet insubstantial. With the sky a bright spring blue, the blossoms were almost gray, a mist. When the sky was gray the blossoms seemed white, so light in weight, so insubstantial a mist, but a mist of filmy light.

The expressed symbol is not a hard durable thing. It is absorbent, taking an unrealized meaning, absorbing it from the atmosphere, not changing as a result of conscious projection of our logical clarifications into it. No "official" inventions with "official meanings" make it less absorbent.

In painting, elements of the painting act as symbols; when we invest them with official

meanings, as we assign values to numbers, we rob the painting of its vitality. For the life of a symbol is in its refusal to become fixed. It is through its metaphorical quality that it takes on a thousand meanings; meanings changing in time as you work, or afterward, as you contemplate; meanings changing in space, intraspatial meanings; meanings that take in new values as approached from varying standpoints, frames of mind—emotional and logical. The totality of the painting finally becomes a supreme metaphor. Altogether giving that fleeting delight of a monument realized, for the merest fraction of a second you have had a vision, so clear, so lucid, so real, yet far beyond the bounds of daily reality. The thing that is there in present reality has the quality of constantly becoming something beyond. This is the metaphor, the breath of the spirit that infuses all things, its essence most evident when you can feel the presence of life so.

4/26/54

The problem of meaning in painting has never been more clouded over by confusion and misconception than it is at present. Both among the painters and laymen there is evidence of this confusion. At forums, in artists' statements in articles, in reviews, there constantly occurs the question whether a painting has meaning, in what sense it has meaning, and how meaning can be apprehended by its viewer or "appreciator"; it is difficult to cut through this clouding over and come to any clear understanding. Is it beautiful because of the success with which the "plastic" elements—i.e., its quality of sensuous elements—are used? Does it have meaning dependent on a literal interpretation of the ideal construction? A painting can mean a man on a horse, a "Polish Rider," etc., which are literal meanings, and have unliteral ideal meanings besides. They are, as we say, on different levels.

To me, the ideal meaning is the result of the implications there are in the painting that go beyond any literal interpretation. In fact, a painting, as an aesthetic object, has its real meaning in those implications and only in those implications. The so-called "subject of" the painting is then little more than the device by which the painter leads us to the ultimate or real meaning of the painting.

It is true that before an abstract painting was conceived the subject had a somewhat different kind of meaning than it has for us today. The medieval painter, for instance, had to feel the necessity of making an image out of what was primarily a religious urge. Today, we can and do conceive of a painting as having its reason for being in its beauty alone. To the medieval miniaturist, art contributed to a religious image. To us, religion may or may not contribute to the image for its own sake. We are more apt to think of a painting as having its own reason for being, found within the painting's expressive means.

This, however, does not dispose of the question what does or what can a painting mean? What can it have to say? A painting—like a

poem, a novel, a symphony, a statue—states a truth, not an explicit  $2 + 2 = 4$  truth, but a truth that is come to as a conviction, a belief, a feeling. It may be better to say that it reveals a truth. Or it may be still better to say that a painting expresses a feeling about a truth and, the expressed feeling more clearly reveals the truth than any explicit statement can.

As a law in physics states a principle, a painting states a truth. The physical principle is so complete in a single statement that its truth holds in the face of examination by any numbers of different people approaching it in any number of ways. The painting states or, better, expresses a truth that is of as general an applicability as the physical law, but it has a different subject and is in a different mode. Where the physical has as its subject the physical universe, and its intention is to reveal physical truth, the painting has as its subject man's concern about himself, and its intention is to reveal a human truth. Painting among other arts has revealed itself as a medium fitting to such a purpose. It agrees or goes along with the modes of feeling that men have about themselves and their experience.

What must be kept in mind is that the fundamental problems and functions of painting still hold and will continue to hold, whatever there is that is new and different in painting. The novelty of abstract forms tends to obscure the fact that these forms are serving the same basic functions that the old forms serve.

It does not do simply to dismiss the abstract painting by saying that its forms do not mean anything, are cold and sterile, or are too fanciful and private in their meaning to reach the public. For the fact is that there are abstract paintings in which both their painters and an ever growing public find meaning and value, and that no significant movement using traditional purely representational forms has appeared or is operating that is having any impact of importance on either painters or the public. In short, the vitality of painting today lies overwhelmingly with the abstract painters. That vitality, I am convinced, lies not in the fact that the forms are new, but in the fact that the artists are searching for meaning both deeply and earnestly, and the forms that they come to use are expressive of the meaning that they find.

A painting is a work of art, then, because first of all it is the painter's intention to seek larger meanings. It is these meanings that must be looked for, as well as the more immediate (possibly explicit) meanings that are, so to speak, only avenues of approach to the larger meanings. A painting is a work of art also because the painter has found the means—the aesthetic means—that carry his meaning. They are expressive of that meaning.

That is to say, the subject in a representational painting has many meanings that are not primarily aesthetic and that do not contribute directly. In fact, they may block off the total aesthetic effect. A literal subject in a painting is aesthetically legitimate only in so far as whatever it is in its natural form that touches off the aesthetic emotion. A human

figure, say, has the quality of evoking an aesthetic response. It is, however, his response that the artist works with, not that specific human figure that evoked the response. So the literal subject becomes a transmitter or a funnel; it is the wire that carries the electrical charge where the purpose is to get the charge from here to there. The abstract painter likewise has a subject that, while it "carries" the meaning, is not the meaning. The "lines" and the "color planes" of a Mondrian painting do not mean "Black lines" and "color planes" any more than a Renoir nude means any specific nude person. Mondrian's forms, like Renoir's, are means by which his whole deeper aesthetic meaning is presented.

Another thing that is a stumbling block to the understanding of art today is the lack of cultural climate that accepts art for what it is. Everyone will admit to, even emphatically proclaim, a very truly and deeply felt idealism. But in today's cultural climate, the means of expression of such idealism is understood



MYRON STOUT

poorly. Thus, a painting—any painting—whether it is a Piero della Francesca or by Picasso, is generally not understood in its larger aesthetic meaning (which is an ideal meaning) out of a direct and personal response to it as a painting, but out of various responses that are indirect and quite incidental to the aesthetic content.

What then is it that makes a painting a work of art? First of all, I would say that it is not the painting itself that makes it art; it is the painter; it is his concern with himself, his own experience as a living, breathing human being in an outside objective world filled with other such living, breathing individuals as himself. He, like they, seeks a meaning that goes beyond the meaning of the daily, practical, and exigent meanings. He seeks a meaning that has an overall, a comprehensive meaning, one that does not only reside in this event or that object, that, at the same time that it is present in this or that event or object, is also present with some continuity, and some constancy in all the events and objects of his experience. And that experience, it must never be forgotten, he shares with his fellow human beings who have similar capacities for feeling, responding, conceiving and expressing. All artists are artists not just because they have a talent for drawing, writing, or sculpting. They cannot be artists until and unless they

are concerned about meaning. People do not—or certainly they should not—become artists because they have a talent for painting and paintings are marketable and that way they can make a living. People do not become artists because that is the niche in the current scheme of things that they fit into best. There is no reason in the world for anyone to be an artist unless he cares about such things as art can express.

The painter today recognizes that in the art of painting no carrier of meaning that has been given to him by the past exactly fits what he, today, has to mean. This new carrier, the new symbolism, the new language of vision, call it what you will, however, is not necessarily the result of a search for new symbols. The symbols evolve/develop/appear with the search for meaning; they are not the end, but the means. In the solution of any human problem, the means must necessarily be found that fit the end sought. Now, since the end sought is not known beforehand, the means tend to become infinitely more difficult of apprehension than the end. So the means assume an importance that tends to become overriding. It is only clarity and strength of purpose that can carry the artist through his "dark woods" of means. Today, with a reactionary public of other artists and laymen hounding them constantly, and all pervasively, his real purpose and intention is lost. He is not just willfully arbitrarily developing a new language, a new "set" of symbols. However important to him they are, they are but a by-product of his quest at best, and for the modern generations of the public, the critics, and the artists to insist that his symbolism be immediately comprehensible on the basis of a ready-made set of symbols, such as the alphabet, only shows that they don't understand—and never have understood—the purpose that the old and traditional set of symbols served.

It must never be forgotten that the artist doesn't have, never had, and never will have, ready-made symbols; nor does he just incidentally pick them up on his way; nor can any symbols be taught by one person to another; nor any surefire method be developed to teach him just how to find them for himself. *He must find out on his own*, his purpose firm, his patience infinite, his faith boundless, his vision open to the ends of all the universes conceivable.

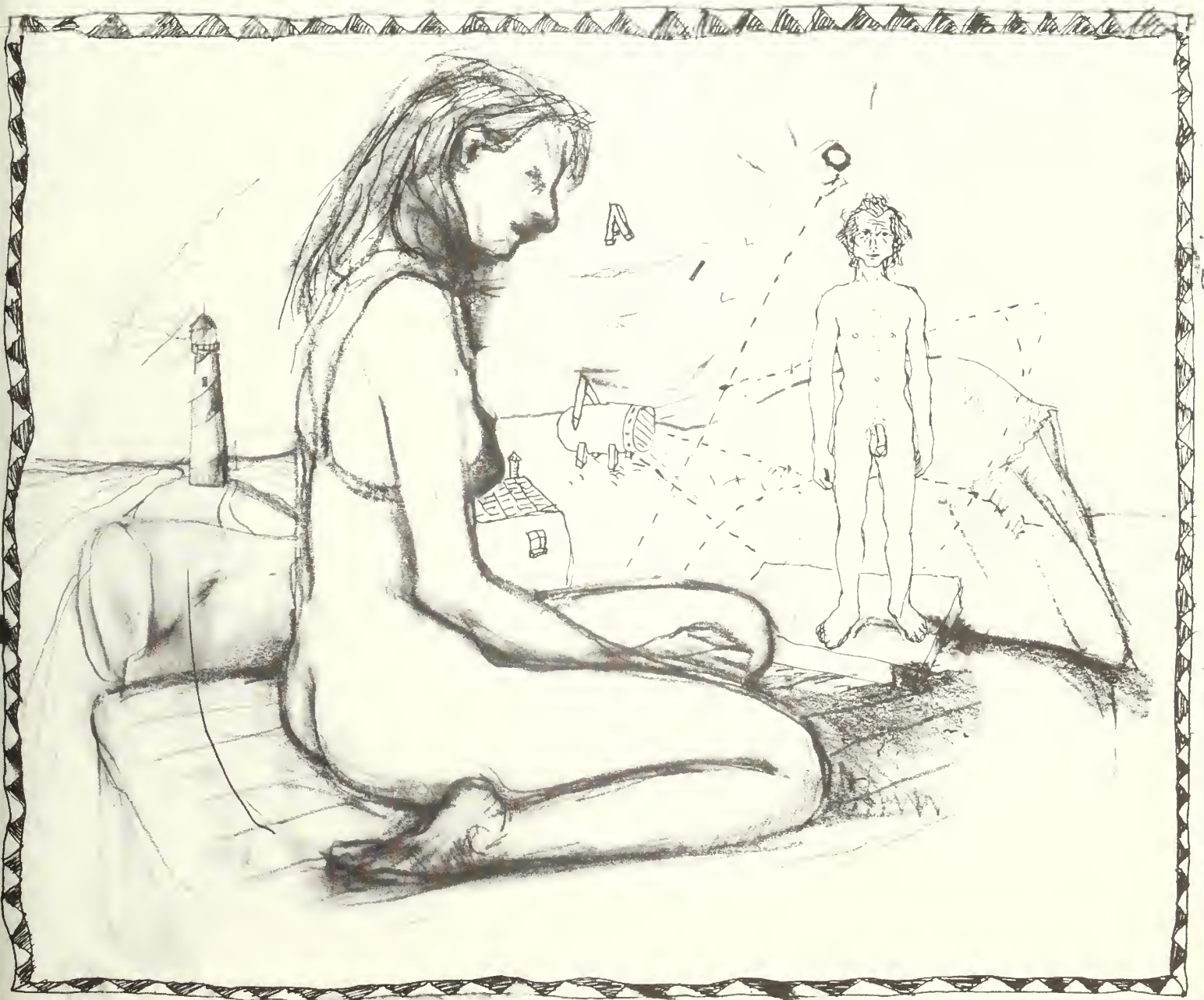
And, if it be complained and often be true that the result will be simply a multitude of individual symbolisms, meaningless to the world at large, it is immediately to be denied that this follows. It is to be denied that the artist is lost when thrown so completely on his own. The fact is that the artist has always, in the deepest sense, been completely on his own. The creative artist is necessarily on his own. It is the chance he takes when he becomes an artist, that other artists—and, finally, the public—will follow the creative artist, as has time and time again been demonstrated by history.

She lived in New London, he in Uncasville. They knew each other three days. Theirs houses were connected by a railroad track. On the phone they decided to walk the tracks, to meet half way.

She didn't really know him yet - but the fireworks that 4<sup>th</sup> of July made her smile. She felt those little explosions across the river were really coming from some special electricity he was generating.

He liked to watch her from behind as they rode bikes. She always wore this green skirt. They swam in the ocean and painted a lot of pictures out in the open air. He liked her white cotton underpants, Sears Roebuck style. She thought his plaid bikini underwear was funny.

They bought a mattress for 30 dollars, painted an old bed pink, and named it "Big Pink". They liked to listen to Richard and Linda Thompson sing "Sweet Surrender" while lying on their mattress.



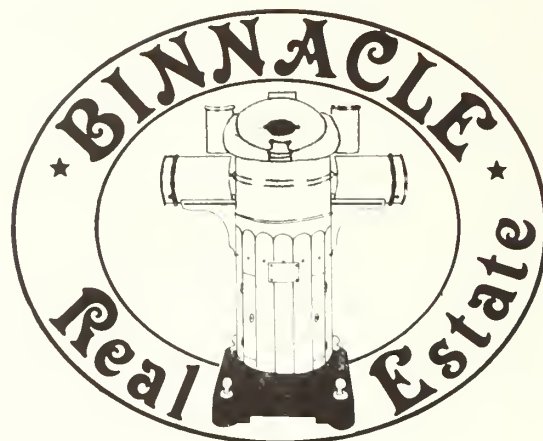
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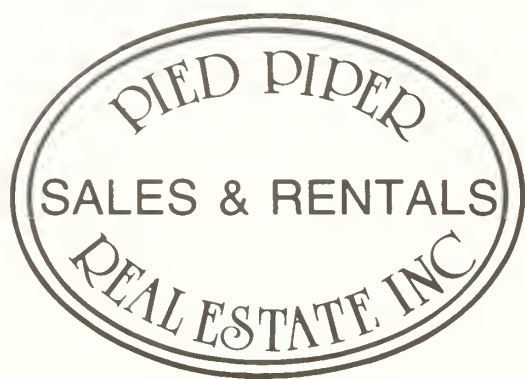
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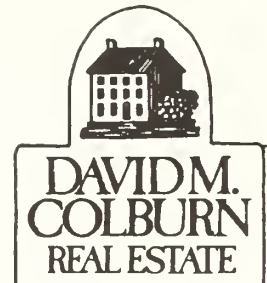
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# Ciro & Sal's A MEMOIR

Edward Giobbi with Christopher Busa

Sal went to Vesper George School of Art in Boston when I did. He came to study with Henry Hensche as I had. Ciro studied with Henry the year before. But when I met him, he had a small child, and he was working as a delivery boy for the A & P. Ciro was not in our class, because he had to work, though he painted at night. At the time I was cooking a lot. I started cooking as a student in Boston. I figured that if I did not cook well enough to take care of myself I would never live long enough to be the artist I expected to be. I couldn't afford to eat in restaurants, of course, so I chose to eat properly by learning how to cook. In Provincetown, I received fish from the fishermen, and once a summer I made a big spaghetti and meatball dinner for about twenty-five of them. They were good friends of mine, and I used to go out on the boats with them sometimes. They gave me all the fish I wanted.

Then I went to Italy, stayed four years, and came back in 1954. In the summer of '55, I began going to Provincetown again. Ciro and Sal's had opened the previous year. The following summer, the restaurant was going full blast. I used to cook for fifteen or twenty of us, two or three times a week, for lunch, because they were not open for lunch. I'd bring all the fish that I got for nothing. I always cooked a fish dish—pasta and fish. We ate, drank, and had a ball. Then Sal and Ciro would ease their way into the kitchen at about three o'clock and start preparing dinner, while we sometimes continued partying.



These guys started off making grinders, knowing little about food. The early menus were very Italo-American: veal and peppers, chicken cacciatore, spaghetti and meatballs. Not sophisticated. A couple of early recipes were unusual, however. The pasta foriana was the contribution of Sal's father, Romolo. He worked as a plumber in America, but he had been a very talented tinsmith in Italy. He made the original sinks at the restaurant by nailing tin to a plywood base. Soon Ciro and Sal got more curious. Sal still keeps a Neopolitan menu, but Ciro became more experimental. He's very good at putting things together. Ciro has a very broad understanding. Sal is more regional with a radiant family-style feeling. I'm surprised those two ever got together, considering how different they are. Sal was the more dominant partner. When Sal left, Ciro blossomed. His own identity came out.

One time I cooked a dinner at Ciro and Sal's for Walter Chrysler and his party. He took over the whole restaurant. Both Ciro and Sal had asked me to cook this one dish of chicken and fish. I got all the fish for nothing, over forty pounds, which I carried in two big sacks, one in each hand. We cooked the chicken first in two trays. I spread a light tomato sauce over the chicken. I added mint. Then I spread the fish around and baked it all together. A beautiful sight. These big trays were so beautiful. As I was doing it, Sal would stick his head in and say, "I think it needs a little green, Ed." So we threw in a little parsley. Someone else would say, "You know, a little black would look good," so we threw in some

olives. That's the way we talked: a little black, a little red, a little green. You understood, of course: a little black would set off the red and the green was complementary to the red. It was beautifully done—then everybody arrived at once. What we didn't think about was how to serve it. All of a sudden, we had these whole lobsters, whole whittings, sections of chicken, and suddenly we had to divide it all, so that each plate had a little bit of this and a little bit of that. We tried to break the lobsters with our hands, but they were hot. It was a nightmare. We should have prepared individual casseroles. That's what we did, after that, when it went on the menu as Cacciaccio alla Livornese.

That's how we learned. Those guys had no restaurant experience, so it was always a learning experience. They would do something, and it would go right or it would

be a disaster; then they would improvise. They had a lot of guts to do it on a shoestring and to learn as they did. The ones that worked out remained on the menu, a fine way to do things.

Ciro and Sal wanted artists to come to their restaurant. Artists got special tables, special prices. Artists were welcome there. If you were an artist you were not treated like a tourist. You were treated as a member of the family. In fact, we had a table reserved for us. *Ciro* made deals with artists, meals for paintings. It was like the Century Club in New York, which was originally created by artists. Artists have first priority, regarding membership. You're supposed to wear a tie there, but if an artist walks in without a tie, they let him pass without a word. They respect you more if you're an artist than if you are a very prominent businessman.

Artists generally make good cooks. They are sensitive to form and color, balance, sense of presentation, timing. Also, they are not inhibited, not afraid to take chances. In fact, the important paintings are the ones in which you make mistakes, and you learn from the mistakes. The painting must be more than a showing of what you know. It should show what you don't know. If you are an artist, you'll have an advantage over the guy who's not an artist. But it cannot possibly replace the pure creative process. You can be creative with cooking, but it's not painting. Painting is an unlearning process. Painting is self-psychoanalysis. That's not what cooking is all about. With cooking you utilize what you know, you utilize your senses. Cooking is all on the surface, on the edge of your finger and your taste buds; it's all outside stuff, although, if you're good, you use all your sensibility. But painting is a tearing apart. It's an unearthing, an unlearning. It hurts; it's painful. I like to cook because it's fun. I like to cook because I can get three morons to come to my home and make them happy with my food. I can make a child happy, I can make an old person happy. I can make a blind person happy. I just give them a nice meal. But I can take them up to my studio, and one out of fifty will react.



photo Dan Bernstein



SUNNY TASHA BARBARA CHOBANIAN GRACE RIZK ROMANOS RIZK LISA LISA'S FRIEND  
VICTOR DECARLO MIRHAN CHOBANIAN FRED TASHÉ HARRIET MILLER CIRO LILLIAN BLOOM

I'm not a snob about food. I don't think food is more important than a human relationship. At a table, you are sitting with your family, or people you like. The important thing is the sharing. That's the primary thing. When you are hungry, what's better than a nice piece of cheese, a nice plate of pasta, and a bottle of wine? *Ciro & Sal's* was not a great restaurant. Very often it was not even a good restaurant. The pasta often was overcooked, the sauce heavy, acidic, sometimes burnt. To call *Ciro & Sal's* a great restaurant is to miss the point. It had a wonderful environment. You felt welcome there. When you sat down you felt at home. Friends were nearby. Under those circumstances, everything tasted good. I went there in the early days when I was single, after I'd get through painting. I'd sit down at the family table. *Sal's* father would be there; sometimes Angelo Ippolito. We'd sit down. We'd talk, we'd laugh. We'd eat a simple meal. I wasn't pushed out. If they gave me hard bread and olive oil, that would have been fine.

Most of the help were artists themselves. When Bugsy Boghosian was serving me, what the hell was I supposed to do—treat him like a waiter? You had the same help every year; they all went back. Then in the evening, when the restaurant was about to close, we'd go in for a piece of dessert and very often *Sal* and

*Ciro* would sit down with us. Both of those guys were very generous. They'd give away coffee and drinks and bottles of wine. Maybe they weren't careful enough: there were a lot of freeloaders floating around. I never felt I was freeloading, even during the year they gave artists special prices. I cooked there, gave them recipes. I wouldn't have felt right otherwise. That's my background. If somebody does something for me, I always give back in some way. That was the way I was brought up.

I was involved with *Ciro* and *Sal's* during the golden years of my life: I was young; I was a professional painter. I was selling my paintings, showing in museums. I wasn't making a great deal of money, but I was living off my paintings to the extent that I even bought a house in Provincetown from the sales. My aspirations were within grasp, all was going up, and there was *Ciro* and *Sal's*. I had everything but a home, and the restaurant gave me the warmth of a home: it was like the framework; it was like the architecture of the day—that's where the stability was. The ambience, the hospitality, the friendships: that's what the restaurant means to me. The food? I don't even remember what I ate.

This spring Donald Fine published *Ciro & Sal's Cookbook: Recipes, Tips & Lore* from the Acclaimed Chef of Provincetown's famous Italian Restaurant. The book has been chosen as a Book of the Month Club—Cooking selection. For this memoir Provincetown Arts interviewed Edward Giobbi, a painter who exhibits at the Armstrong Gallery in New York and at the Long Point Gallery in Provincetown. Giobbi is also the author of two cookbooks.

# FRIENDS

## *Excerpts from Joan Lebold Cohen's China Notebook*

It was not until my fourth trip to China, seven years after my first visit, that my repeated requests to meet teachers of Chinese art history, visit art schools, and talk to students were granted. This was in February 1979, immediately after Deng Xiaoping's visit to the United States. During an extraordinary three-month period, there was an outpouring of admiration by the Chinese for America, as if lost lovers had been reunited. I was aware that, at last, my opportunity to learn about contemporary Chinese art was at hand. The official slogan of that time—revived from the 1956-57 era—was "Let a hundred flowers bloom," which meant that once again the Chinese were urged to speak their minds on all subjects. It was the freest atmosphere ever enjoyed in the People's Republic of China since its founding in 1949. All over China, citizens were putting up wall posters denouncing officials, airing grievances, and asserting rights.

I came to China with my husband, who is also a teacher in the field of Chinese studies. We were both on leave from our academic posts. During previous trips, beginning in 1972, the year of the first Nixon visit, our hosts had told me that art schools were closed and that the artists were in the countryside. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, which began in 1966, was still in progress, and it would end with the death of Mao.

This time it was different. I had requested interviews with specialists in all aspects of contemporary Chinese art and art education, and I offered in exchange to talk about American art and art education. The authorities at Beijing's Central Academy of Fine Arts welcomed an exchange of ideas, and during our first hour of conversations I realized they were just as interested in finding out about America as I was in learning about China. They invited me to give three lectures, using slides to introduce American art. I gave two of the lectures in March, during the high tide of intellectual excitement. About three hundred people attended the first lecture, although it had not been publicized outside the academy. Apparently the word had spread by the time of the second lecture, which dealt

with American art since the Armory show of 1913. Many people were turned away, but four hundred and fifty were crammed into the hall, and the atmosphere was electric as they saw slides of Jackson Pollock, William De Kooning, Franz Kline, and others. The extraordinary interest wasn't difficult to understand: I was told that these were the academy's first lectures on American art in thirty years.

A lively discussion with wide-ranging questions followed the first two talks: What role does the United States government play in art? Who is the best artist in America? Do American artists really starve? Which is the best art school? What is its philosophy? Curriculum? And so on.

I returned to China in April 1979, to give the third lecture, as promised. By this time, however, the party line on intellectual freedom and the treatment of Americans had shifted. Discussions of previously forbidden topics could continue, but they were subject to important limitations, and the reception of Americans took place in an officially courteous, but distant and suspicious, environment.

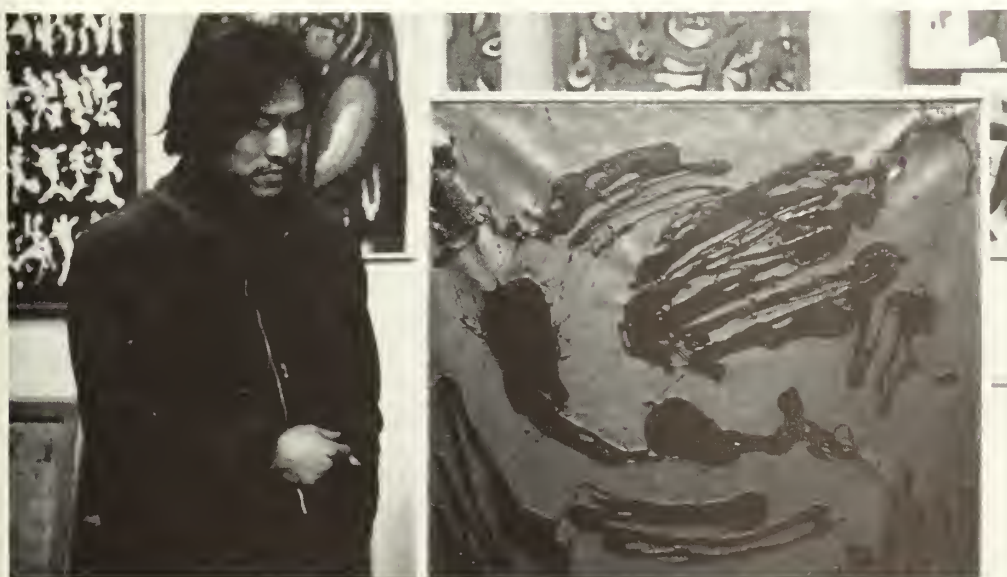
This time I was forced to lecture in a classroom that accommodated forty people instead of four hundred. At the end of the slide presentation, which featured contemporary American painters, my host thanked me and said that it was interesting to hear how a foreigner explained her own culture's art, but the Chinese authorities had their own views on American art. He went on to say that, although I had said I would welcome questions, he was sure I was too tired to answer any. There were no questions and no discussion period.

We lived in China for two and a half years, until mid-1981, and during that time I saw every art exhibition that I possibly could, visited many art schools and associations, gave lectures on American art, and talked to hundreds of artists all over China in as many cities as I could visit. Meanwhile, I wrote about Chinese art for foreign magazines and newspapers, and some of these articles were translated and published widely by the Party's little-known but impressive internal-

# ABROAD



WANG KEPING, MA DESHENG, YAN LI, XU LEILEI, HUANG RUI POSE IN THE COURTYARD OF HUAN RUI'S FAMILY HOUSE. THEY ORGANIZED A GROUP OF ARTISTS TO DEMAND EXHIBITION SPACE IN 1979



LIU XIAODI WITH THE "MYSTERY OF BLACK" AT THE FIRST EXHIBITION OF MODERN ART IN XI'AN

publications system, thereby adding to the dialogue. I was also able to collect basic information that I later supplemented during semi-annual visits to China and through continuing contacts with many of the Chinese artists who have recently gone abroad to study.

Interviews in China were often difficult to arrange because of the bureaucratic morass of officialdom. Artists, art, and those with foreign connections had been key targets during the Cultural Revolution. I know of an artist who was accused of "spying for a foreign country" during that period, and who was sentenced to death because he had studied French, befriended some Frenchmen of the French Embassy, and hoped to study abroad. Confirming evidence of his treason was introduced by transforming a joke he'd made about Jiang Qing (wife of Chairman Mao Zedong)—that the success of the Cultural Revolution could only be assured if Mao divorced Jiang Qing.

Art in China is serious business—Lenin called for art to be a cog in the wheel of revolution—state business. There are certain obvious advantages to having the state as one's patron, such as a lifetime guaranteed income, space and materials, but many would argue that official control obviates the advantages.

An example of how the Big Brother spectre haunted my access to artists from 1979-84 was reflected in my visits to the Beijing Central Academy of Fine Arts. Over time I had become friends with a number of artists and visited them informally to see their new work and to chat. However, foreign access to the academy was controlled by a gatekeeper who demanded certain information, in writing: name, address, Chinese host organization, reason for visit, person to visit, time of arrival/departure, and the signature of the person visited. Feeling nervous, I would slink around, hoping that no one saw whom I visited so that it could not be reported. I certainly did not want to cause problems for my friends who, during the Cultural Revolution, could have been accused of heinous bourgeois crimes ranging from selling paintings to divulging state secrets.

# FISH HOUSE STUDIOS



ARTHUR COHEN

"PROVINCETOWN HARBOR" 1976-77



PAUL RESIKA

"PROVINCETOWN PIER, LOW TIDE" 1984-85

by George D. Bryant

The Town of Provincetown is about to demolish one of the sturdiest structures that it owns: the old Seafood Packers building on MacMillan Wharf. The removal was originally scheduled for the month of May, but there are indications that the contractor wishes to delay until September. The selectmen have already signed the contract so that only a miracle can save the building. Its destruction is obviously a wasteful and immoderate act, as the building could continue to serve the town, as well as to provide needed space for the arts and other segments of the community.

The voters were told that the building had to be demolished because it stood in the way of the new development scheme for the wharf. This is not entirely correct, as slight changes could be made in the plans that would accommodate the Seafood Packers structure. The real reason for the demolition of the building can be traced to self-interest and lack of imagination in the town planning group.

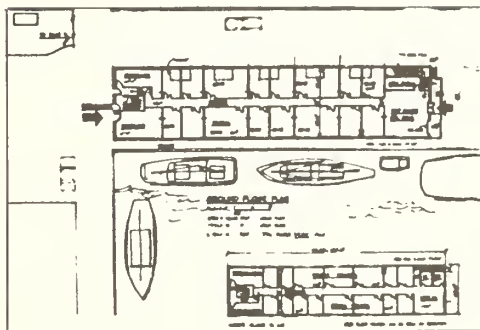
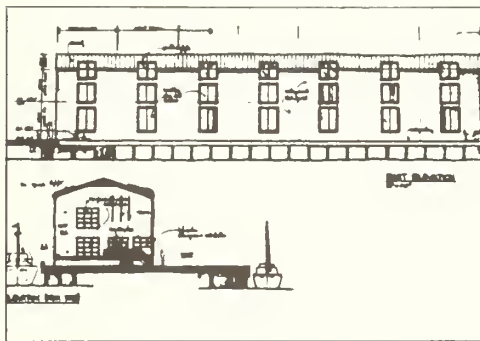
As the building stands today, it is in better general structural condition than most town-owned buildings. Very few of our municipal buildings are newer. The magnificent second floor of the building has never been seen by most townspeople. It was designed to permit the full use of a column-free open space 175 feet long and 40 feet wide. I do not believe that there is another space of this magnitude in Provincetown. The wharf system under the building has extra supports that were specifically designed to carry heavy loads. When the pier was structurally analyzed several years ago, it was found that the section under the building itself was in better condition than any other part of the outer  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the entire structure.

The total floor area of the building is 14,000 square feet. In its present condition it is worth



STUDY FOR MacMILLAN WHARF CONVERSION

HARVEY DODD



no less than \$25 per square foot and probably no more than \$50 per square foot. Therefore, its value ranges between \$350,000 and \$700,000. I do not think that anyone can argue that our town is in a position to demolish an asset of this magnitude.

We have proposed for the past year that most of the building be converted into artists' and writers' studios—work space, not living space. A special corporation would have to be created to lease all of the building from the town, with the exception of the existing harbor master's office on the southwest corner. Its function would be to perform the necessary improvements and manage the building for the period of a thirty-year lease (after which the building would revert to the town). Approximately thirty studios of varying sizes could be created in the building after the corporation made an investment of about \$500,000 for improvements: repairs, windows, partitions, heating, electrical service, and finishes. The total yearly rent for each studio would average \$3,000, allowing for maintenance and service costs, and a yearly rent to the town of \$30,000 (which would be twice that paid by the former tenant). We suspect that each of the studio lessees could easily rent their quarters for the three summer months in return for \$3,000 and thus enjoy the remaining nine months rent free.

Provincetown has a long tradition of opening doors for citizens who wish to work. It is almost necessary in a community that is as geographically isolated as ours. The town acquired the MacMillan Wharf rights sixty years ago to ensure an access to the sea for the fishermen. The Seafood Packers building is no longer needed as a fish house. Would it be unreasonable to assert that it is now the artists' turn to use this bulky gray landmark?

*George Bryant is an architect, a former selectman, and a Provincetown historian.*

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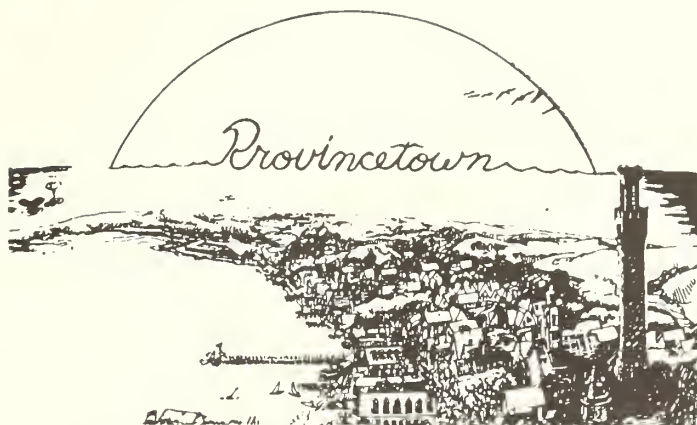
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MICHAEL MALONEY

Photo: Roger Robles

# Conversations with Art Dealers

## Michael Maloney

*Michael Maloney represents several Provincetown artists in Provincetown and Los Angeles.*

**Christopher Busa:** Your father is a private investigator?

**Michael Maloney:** He has been involved with many aspects of crime. He was in narcotics, he was in burglary, then later with strategic support, which dealt specifically with bombs, machine guns, and trafficking arms. He worked for the Los Angeles Police Department until he injured his back in a car accident while on assignment. He did early retirement so he could become a private investigator. Much of his work involves boats, which he loves. He has contacts at marinas all over the world.

**CB:** Can you give me an example of an investigation involving boats?

**MM:** People in corporate positions have been known to quit their jobs and see the world. They'll get rid of the house, divorce the wife,



JACK SHAINMAN

## Jack Shainman

*Jack Shainman represents several Provincetown artists in New York and Washington.*

**Christopher Busa:** Now that you have your East Village gallery, tell us about the busy and glamorous life.

**Jack Shainman:** You see me here licking stamps. Busy is right; glamorous I'm not so sure about. I should add, I am leaving the East Village in September, relocating in SoHo at 560 Broadway.

**CB:** Let's start with you in Provincetown. What is your Cape background?

**JS:** I used to summer there, worked in the restaurants like everybody used to do. I've always had an incredible fondness for Provincetown, especially the natural beauty. The summers, the sun, the cool breezes, drew me. Down in Washington, where I lived while I was going to college, it got very hot in May. A friend of mine suggested Provincetown, and we hopped in a car. The historic richness of

and get on a boat. Usually they will be delinquent on their payments. His job would be to track down the boat. They go to Mexico or Hawaii. Last summer he sailed a boat back from the Fiji Islands. He asked me to go with him. I was faced with a choice between making a ninety-day trip back from paradise and opening the gallery in Provincetown.

**CB:** There is probably a connection between being a private investigator and being an art dealer.

**MM:** A type of curiosity that verges on nosiness.

**CB:** You started not wishing to be a dealer, but to be an artist.

**MM:** Yes. I studied art history and painting here at the Los Angeles Art Center, basically a commercial art school. I was interested in photo-realism at the time, and I wished to learn the techniques of making photo-realistic paintings, which is why I chose that school. In retrospect, I was wrong. I developed the facility to make paintings, but I lacked training in the principles and reasons for making art.

**CB:** So you missed Jasper Johns's three-step simplified course for making art: one, take an object; two, do something to it; three, do something else to it?

**MM:** I like that. Where was that course when I needed it? Alas, I moved to Boston, had a studio, continued painting. In the summers I went to Provincetown and painted full-time, all the while I was also involved in several real estate projects with a friend. It is painful to say this, but I did not feel I was making a significant contribution to painting, so I hung it up. I took two years to make this decision. I set a goal for myself. If I was not satisfied by a certain time, I would change.

**CB:** How does training as an artist bear on being a dealer?

**MM:** I find that I'm compassionate toward the process an artist must undergo to make art. I gravitate toward showing painting because I understand the problems inherent in making significant painting. Usually it is necessary to know an artist's body of work, perceiving the direction he is taking as a whole.

**CB:** You are negotiating to show Jim Peters

this summer. What is your response to his work?

**MM:** Personally, I like the grittiness. They are very painted, very put together. They have a compelling mystery. They're sexy and erotic, up front and genuine, without being vulgar. Each viewer is going to find a different story in each picture, and I think that is intentional on Jim's part. It is the case with a lot of artists that they hide the impetus behind their imagery, so that when the painting leaves the studio the narrative of its making is lost, and the viewer recreates it with his own associations.

**CB:** Obviously Jim's work is far more narrative than Jim Hansen's or Paul Bowen's, to pick two other Provincetown artists you show.

**MM:** The further back you go with Jim Hansen's career, the more narrative the work becomes, an implied narrative with figure associations left to the viewer. It is only in his most recent work that he systematically edits out any narrative reference. All artists grow and change, but Hansen does so drastically. Now he is playing around with foreground

the art community intrigued me. I knew that Motherwell painted there, Kline had, and Tennessee Williams had done his time, too. There was this romantic notion of art, fishing, and the small village with white clapboard houses. I was attracted to the cultural aspect of Provincetown, the informality, the freedom of the beach resort. I loved it; I still do, though I am beginning to prefer the off-season. It was so beautiful last February when I visited to attend a Fine Arts Work Center meeting.

**CB:** What did you study in college?

**JS:** I studied architecture, literature, art, art history, and film.

**CB:** After college, what did you imagine you would be doing for a career?

**JS:** I had wanted to get into this business from an early time. I wasn't sure exactly how. Perhaps I was lucky that my parents had always taken me to galleries and museums. We had an art collection at home, including artists that were friends of my parents. It was not a spectacular collection, but it was animated and personal. My father, who taught music history at Williams College, would take

me to Europe on his sabbaticals, where I saw great art. Also, in the town where I was raised in Massachusetts, Williamstown, there is a fabulous museum, the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute.

From the beginning I had wanted, somehow, to make a career in the art world. My first serious thoughts were to be involved with the museum aspect. I attempted to do this in Washington at a time when Reagan had put a freeze on hiring in government museums. (Most of the museums in D.C. are government sponsored.) Instead, I was showing horses, something I had done in Williamstown and Connecticut, New York, North Carolina, and Washington.

**CB:** How did you learn about being an art dealer?

**JS:** I got a job in a gallery in Washington and worked there for four years. I had wanted to do something on my own, but I was scared and I didn't know how to do it. I was offered jobs in New York at decent galleries, but they wanted me to build crates and wrap paintings. I didn't want to go to New York and do that.

In the meantime, I was approached by Tom Antonelli and Jerry Giardelli, whom I had known for quite a while. They asked me to come to Provincetown and run their gallery. I was excited, but the reality discouraged me from returning to Provincetown for the next summer. It's a tough town in which to make ends meet running a gallery. The tourists mostly want to buy paintings at those stores where you can buy and walk out with a big brown garbage bag. Garbage art. It would make me crazy, because I was trying to put on serious shows. So much of this business is public relations and footwork, and often it is not until three months after the show opens that you will sell it out. Sometimes, with artists like James Hansen and Claude Simard, I have sold out at the opening, or even before, but that is unusual, and the reality of this business is that it's an ongoing process, too abbreviated in Provincetown's three-month season. I had wanted it to work so much.

**CB:** The amount of paint on any canvas is seldom worth more than three dollars. When you sell a painting, you are not selling paint

## Michael Maloney

and background, trying to flatten things out. CB: It was in 1982 that you opened a gallery in Provincetown. You ceased making art totally to do this.

MM: I am compensated by my satisfactions. I love making sales. I get to work with artists, and I get to work with clients, totally different worlds. Clients are often successful business people, or successful in a fashion that provides them with leisure time to look at and appreciate art. That stage in a person's life is usually later, when they are more comfortable financially. And then there is a whole new group of young collectors in their late twenties, early thirties, that are stockbrokers, doctors, lawyers. The exciting thing about Provincetown was that my clients were mostly young professional people. Plus, I see my work as a career that will go on for many

years, while I feel that most artists have careers that peak for ten years at best. It seems to work in decades, the next decade difficult to sustain.

CB: Artists are like athletes in the sense that the moment of their performance is centered on the task of excellence. After they have peaked, they seem to get biologically exhausted. Where do you, as a dealer, feel your field of excellence is? In the selection of paintings for a show, in the social mix at an opening?

MM: I select work that goes into a show. I have a good feel for hanging and organizing exhibitions, making the body of work physically work together in the presentation.

CB: Why did you choose to open a gallery in Los Angeles?

MM: I wanted something to complement my gallery in Provincetown, the East End Gallery (which you are now running for me). Ideally I would have found a winter operation in Florida, returning in the summer to run Provincetown. I looked for a long time. I worked for the Hokin Gallery in Palm Beach—she

deals with blue-chip contemporary masters. But I was bored there. I went to all the major cities and found it difficult to concentrate on the kind of serious work I want to show by artists age twenty-five to forty. I went to Chicago and New York, and kept returning to Los Angeles. There are 694 galleries in New York and 160 galleries in Los Angeles, perhaps a dozen of them serious. There is much more room for movement here. This winter the Museum of Contemporary Art opened their space, over ninety-five thousand square feet, and the L.A. County Museum added a twentieth century wing, 115 thousand square feet of exhibition space. And the Lannan Foundation moved out here. They spend, yearly, five million dollars on unrecognized or under-appreciated artists of this century. CB: And of course the Getty Museum is here, but that does not directly aid contemporary art.

MM: Not directly, but they have a large research department. They have to spend, by law, some awesome figure, a huge chore of spending, by law, perhaps fifty million dollars

## Jack Shainman

as a material value so much as you are selling it as a symbolic value. How does a dealer persuade someone that he or she needs to buy a symbol?

JS: A true gallery is not a shop. You don't just hang things on the wall and seduce the impulse shopper through the attractiveness of your displays. You are not only selling a painting. You are selling ideas. You are selling the artist, his knowledge, and what it has taken him to arrive at this point. One of my artists, Arnold Mesches, was showing at my Washington gallery. He is sixty-four, and I was giving him his fifty-first solo show. A group from the Corcoran came for a little lecture on his work. A woman asked him how long it took him to make one particularly large painting. His response was, "Forty-five years."

CB: You leaped from working for other people to opening your own gallery.

JS: That happened after the summer in Provincetown. I learned that I really didn't need other people. What I needed was the financing. I was so tired of working for other people and killing myself. This business requires a lot of hours. You do everything from washing the floor to office work to hanging and selling the paintings. I went back to Washington after that summer and opened my space. I was afraid of New York. The East Village then was not what it is today. To be valid, I thought I needed purple or green hair.

In Washington I knew critics, I knew collectors. I also knew the art scene there, and it was boring. I felt I could add some much-needed energy to it, and I think I did. In Provincetown, I met a whole new group of artists, whom I thought I could bring to Washington: Paul Bowen, James Hansen, Claude Simard, Miriam LaPlante. I went back enthusiastic, filled with incredible energy.

CB: How did you finance your Washington gallery?

JS: On a shoestring. That's all—plus prayer. I had the opportunity to go with backers, but I have never understood what you offer them, and I did not want anyone to dictate the evolution of the gallery. It costs so much to run a gallery: to rent the space, the telephone, the openings, the cards—you saw the postage I used today—public relations, the dinners, the travel. You have to sell a lot of paintings. Yet it all gives me a great deal of satisfaction. Getting a review in the *Voice* or in one of the national magazines gives me as much, if not more, satisfaction as making a good sale.

CB: What are the other pleasures of running a gallery?

JS: Starting with those swear words "emerging artists"—the big collectors are not interested in emerging artists; they want artists who have made their mark—and assisting your artists in getting recognition. People start believing in their work. They start to show nationally, internationally. Then I watch as my own gallery becomes established. Now I am working with quite a few mid-career artists. I feel it is a well-balanced group. It's not about me being famous at all. It's about wanting to have an important gallery. It's about wanting

your artists to be famous, because artists make up the gallery.

CB: An artist may have the same relation to his ego: he may want less to be great than to produce great work.

JS: Exactly.

CB: In dealing with creative people, artists, how do you find your own creative power in the activity? Or isn't that an issue?

JS: Nobody brings it up, but I'm glad you do. I think my satisfactions come from selecting who I show, selecting the work, and actually installing it, putting it all together. You do so many different things for the artists: mother, daddy, brother, banker, manager, shrink. You play it all.

CB: The issue of rapport with the artists: how necessary is it to enter into their lives? Are you strictly businesslike with some of them?

JS: You get very close to them the month their show is up, or even during the few months preceding the show. That's another of the satisfactions. Actually, an artist who I thought was a real prima donna, a constant problem, I got rid of. I thought his work wasn't worth what he put me through. Also, I felt the direction he was going in wasn't right for the gallery. Rapport is crucial, yet it is not always smooth. God forbid I go to a studio of one of my artists and see a body of new work I'm not interested in, or a bad painting. You face it. I tell an artist what I think—that's my job. But I never tell an artist what to do. If he's floundering, that's part of the process. The ones that don't struggle don't create.

CB: Why did you open your New York gallery after opening your Washington gallery?

JS: As time went on in Washington, I was do-

a year.

**CB:** The scale is different in the major cities. What can a dealer learn in P-town?

**MM:** Provincetown is great because it teaches one how to do a full year's business in a short period of time. The pace is quick: two week shows. Everything is condensed. On the other hand, the season is just too short.

**CB:** What attracts collectors to an area?

**MM:** I would like Provincetown to be known again as a vital artist's community, so that when people take their vacations they would come prepared. People come into the gallery and say, "Oh gee, I didn't know there were nice things here." Yet there are. The Fine Arts Work Center is certainly responsible for getting high-quality artists here, and many of them stay on after their fellowships are over. They get married and send their kids to school here. In my travels around the country in search of another art colony where I could go in the winter, I found none that had the substance of Provincetown, none with the combination of history, all the ghosts of the Abstract Expressionists, Kline and Rothko and

the others, plus an authentic energy of artists working now.

**CB:** There is no school you go to in order to become an art dealer. E. A. Carmean once told me that he approached his writing about art like a detective, wishing to recreate the scene of the crime, the occasion when the deed was done and the painting was painted. He conceived of the process of making a painting as akin to committing a crime.

**MM:** There is a similarity in the two professions. One does a lot of nosing around and learns about little things. The artist, like the crook, risks exposure, revealing the small, telltale signs that can give him away to the ridicule of his peers or the handcuffs of his critics.

**CB:** How important is a dealer's rapport with his artists?

**MM:** Very important. You are taking their babies away.

**CB:** I know a successful artist in New York who must see a psychiatrist because he hates to sell his paintings, and he sells every one of them. Some dealers refer to their artists as

their stable, as if the artists were horses whom the dealer groomed to run well for him. How do you refer to your artists?

**MM:** As artists.

ing more and more shows with artists from New York, or who were involved with New York. It became more evident to me that New York is the center of the art world. If I really wanted to put the gallery on the national and international level, I had to be in New York. It was fast and risky, but it's working.

**CB:** You did the most amazing thing. You were barely going with one, then *boom!* you opened here. Everyone was rather shocked.

**JS:** It was the biggest risk I ever took, besides opening the first one. I would have been happier only if I had done it sooner. I put all my chips on one number and spun the wheel. It still takes great energy to go back and forth between the two cities, Washington and New York. I get my strength from the sense of things happening. I now have seventeen artists between my two galleries.

**CB:** The last time I was here, you were on the phone to Rome, and you had just come back from there.

**JS:** I'm working increasingly with European artists. My next show after Paul Bowen is with a West German artist. A European is so different from an American. Their history goes back to before Christ, and they know it. In Florence they have "David" on the street. The architecture is everpresent, and their lives have direct reference to what is very distant for Americans. An old building here is a hundred years old—then it gets knocked down.

**CB:** How did you get your foothold in Italy?

**JS:** I spent a month in Italy. I prepared a show of seven Italian painters, which was called "The New Metaphysical Dream." It was curated by Italo Mussa, and it seemed to open a lot of doors for me. I met people I had never

dreamed of meeting.

**CB:** Do you speak Italian?

**JS:** I'm supposed to learn before August. Now I do a lot of business with Italo, who doesn't speak English. We speak a little Italian, a little French, a little English. Claude Simard speaks Italian and does a lot of translation. And now one of my artists, Luigi Carboni, is showing in Milan. Luckily, the dealer speaks English.

**CB:** Did you meet Giancarlo Politi, the Italian who is editor of *Flash Art*, the magazine that used to be the bible of the East Village?

**JS:** Yes. He is very interested in some of my artists.

**CB:** Do you think that *Flash Art* became important to the East Village precisely because it was foreign?

**JS:** Quite possibly. It makes the issues in New York seem less provincial and incestuous. It also focuses on new art and new ideas. The important critics are in New York.

**CB:** What qualities do you look for in an artist?

**JS:** It's a gut feeling. Then I sit with paintings at home or in the gallery. It is special to sit with paintings for a month during an exhibition and get inside the work. You do one show, then a second, and then you really begin to understand. Perhaps the collectors go through that process more than the critics, who often do a half-hour spin through the gallery and fluff up their words like a slept-on pillow. I always collected art when I was younger. I'd save up to purchase something in St. Tropez, and for antiques as well. I have a passion for collecting. I buy from my artists; or I try to, when I have the money.

**CB:** Older artists are often disrespectful of dealers, younger ones less hostile. They recognize their own limitations, aware of a necessary division of labor.

**JS:** The dealer, the evil one because he is in charge of money, the dealer gets the money first. He has these astronomical expenses. Who do you pay first? It is very important to pay your artists on time.

**CB:** What is your ambition as a dealer?

**JS:** Getting my artists into important shows, museum shows. Showing them at other galleries, in the U.S. and in Europe. Having them reviewed by respected critics and published in the good magazines. Feeling an artist starting to take off—Paul Bowen, for example. He's really on his way. His show in April went very well. The work went to good collectors. A mailing list was established for his work, and because of this show he will exhibit in Paris and possibly in Italy next season. The work is pure and poetic. There is an incredible integrity to it.

**CB:** What's ahead for you?

**JS:** The gallery is entering another phase, another level. It evolves as it grows. It's difficult to step back and see it. I only started to realize when we had to add four new file drawers—and that wasn't enough. But I also realized when interest started coming from all over the world, when all of a sudden I woke up and had four employees and needed another. But the artists continue to grow and evolve too.



CHARLES HAWTHORNE

'THE PHILOSOPHER'

# PROVINCETOWN ART ASSOCIATION & MUSEUM

*by William Evaul*

Before the "Armory Show" in 1913, Paris was the undisputed center of the art world. Many artists made the pilgrimage there, and the Americans were no exceptions. Often, however, the Americans returned each summer to the U.S. Given their cultivation of a continental flair, it is no wonder that Provincetown—with its narrow streets, old world Portuguese community, and decidedly European flavor—became an attractive venue for them. In addition, Charles Hawthorne was a major attraction. Almost singlehandedly, he started the art colony here with the conception of his Cape Cod School of Art, in 1899. He attracted hundreds of students, many of whom went on to establish themselves as prominent artists. Some of Hawthorne's compeers and contemporaries came to Provincetown as well, not to study with Hawthorne, but to do their own work and even to establish their own art schools. Among them were Oliver Chaffee, Ambrose Webster, Richard Miller, William and Marguerite Zorach, and Bror Nordfeldt. These artists populated Provincetown thickly in the summers. Virtually every visitor in

town was an artist or a student in one of the schools. Most would leave at summer's end, with some staying on into the fall and a few stalwarts sticking it out with the fishermen through the long cold winter. But it was the continent that was the destination for most artists in early autumn.

Culturally, Paris was the cutting edge. There, Isadora Duncan revolutionized ballet and gave birth to modern dance. Igor Stravinsky's passionate and unconventional score, *The Rite of Spring*, took Paris by storm. The pace was so intense that Impressionism—a radical idea only a few years earlier—was being eclipsed by new movements. The Fauves scandalized the art world and made Impressionism seem old hat. Picasso and Braque had just invented Cubism. Freud's vocabulary was becoming popular, and Einstein had just published his special theory of relativity.

Politically, Europe was an armed camp, and it is certain that any culturally sensitive person could tell that the halcyon days were numbered. Consequently, the European avant-garde began to look toward America. It

is perhaps no coincidence that the exhibition that marked this shift took place in an armory. The arms race at that time was intense. Several small wars (the Franco-German war, the Turkish Rebellion, the dispute over Morocco, the Russo-Japanese War) served to keep the political powers on edge. Therefore, while there may have been some who were surprised on June 28, 1914, by the assassination of Austrian Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his morganatic wife, few were surprised by Europe's reaction. Within a month, the whole continent was mobilized, and full-scale war was declared, involving all the major European powers. So much for European travel in 1914.

For Americans and for many European expatriates, Provincetown became a haven. It was easy to stay on after the summer of 1914. As it turned out, it was the best thing to happen to American culture. If 1913 marked the beginning of the shift to the Western world's cultural center to New York, the year 1915 confirmed Provincetown as its proving ground. The cauldron of creativity here was



BROR JULIUS OLSSON NORDFELDT

NET



EDWIN W. DICKINSON

VIEW FROM DOS WINDOW



AGNES WEINRICH

STILL LIFE

boiling over.

Charles Hawthorne, with his Cape Cod School of Art, and Ambrose Webster, with his modernist Summer School of Painting, were the leading proponents of the two dominant sensibilities—Traditionalist and Modernist. (Not all artists, however, could or would be subdivided. Edwin Dickinson, for example, was blazing a singularly individual trail, defying classification.)

The salon hostess Mabel Dodge, maven of the avant-garde, and John Reed, the radical political activist, summered in Provincetown in 1914 and became models for Neith Boyce's socially conscious play "Constancy." The company that produced this and three other original plays called themselves the Provincetown Players. That year they teamed up with another young playwright, Eugene O'Neill, and began to revolutionize American theater. B.J.O. Nordfeldt and his band of Provincetown Print Makers revolutionized block print with the invention of single block, "white-line" technique. Artists were everywhere in this remote fishing village. The Provincetown Art Association, only one year old, numbered nearly 150 members. Aspiring artists had their pick of schools and of masters with whom to study. Established artists had a lively community of peers to stimulate discussion (or to pick a fight with).

The exhibition "Provincetown Painters: 1915," May 29—June 21, in the Moffett Gallery at the Provincetown Art Association and Museum, was curated to complement the theater conference "The Cultural Moment: 1915," presented by the Provincetown Playhouse and the University of Massachusetts. Just as political events foreshadowed the Great War in Europe, so too can be found elements of the great confrontation between the Traditionalists and the Modernists, who were acutely polarized by 1927 and continued to be right up to the next

world war. "The Philosopher" (oil on panel), by Charles Hawthorne, was painted around the same time as "Snow Scene" (oil on canvas), by Ambrose Webster. These artists set the tone of the time. An untitled oil landscape by Max Bohm (of whom "The Philosopher" is a portrait) shows the roots of the "dark impressionism" that both Bohm and Hawthorne (via William M. Chase) had earlier learned in Europe, through Frank Duveneck. Lining up alongside these Traditionalists are William Paxton, Oscar Gieberich, George Elmer Browne, Gerrit Beneker, Issac Henry Caliga, Harold Putnam Brown, and Ross Moffett. "Self-Portrait" and "Portrait of George Senseny," two oils on canvas, demonstrate a well-founded understanding of the sensibilities held in esteem by the National Academy. Evident is Paxton's mastery of paint handling. The play of light and the quizical look on the face of George Senseny generates spirit and energy. This and the smooth jewel-like surfaces in the self-portrait are as radical as Paxton gets. George Elmer Browne has an affinity for composition; in an untitled oil sketch, the crest of a dune and a few tufts of beach grass define the action lines of a vigorous spatial relationship. Gerrit Beneker's plein-air painting "Provincetown" proves that the representational need not be dark and dour. An awareness of Hawthorne's "spots of color" theory is utilized to the fullest. The highly keyed color vibrates in an overall harmony, and one can sense the time (mid-day) and the weather (gentle southwest wind) through its color and light. Similarly, a plein-air landscape by I.H. Caliga appears painted in the forenoon. The shadows are cooler, and the highlights are not as intense.

On the opposite side, on the Modernist wall, we see more risk taking and exploration. The synthetic Cubist sensibility was grasped early on by Agnes Weinrich and Blanch Lazzell. These painters were foremost among

American Modernists. Weinrich's "Still Life" (oil on canvas) is one step refined from the analytic Cubists, and her "Musical Abstraction" (oil on board) goes even further towards pure abstraction. "Painting No. 12" (oil on canvas), by Blanche Lazzell, achieves a pinnacle of abstraction. Dynamic composition, plastic form, and movement of color in and out of the picture plane are elements we take for granted today, but at the time they were extremely advanced. Marguerite and William Zorach show the Modernist sensibility applied to the figure. The rhythmic compositions unify the page and transmit a clear, strong signal that buoyed this brand of Modernism right through to today. As in the politics of Europe, the art world in Provincetown was polarizing. An astute observer in 1915 would have predicted the sharp division that lay a short way down the road.

An even more sensitive viewer would have also predicted the end to that division. In the Moffett Gallery, there are two hidden surprises. On the Traditionalist side, there is an oil on canvas entitled "Burning Schooner." The landscape and the figures are readily identifiable, though somewhat stylized. On the Modernist side is a small watercolor painting carved out of color. This composition contains but a few broad strokes of pure color placed judiciously on the page. Neither painting looks out of place on its respective wall. What, then, the surprise? The "Burning Schooner" is by Ross Moffett, a major exponent of the modern movement. The watercolor is by Charles Hawthorne. The obvious thesis, then, is that a good painting is a good painting. Regardless of styles, the elements that compose works are universal.

*William H. Evaul is the Director of the Provincetown Art Association and Museum, and a former painting fellow at The Fine Arts Work Center.*

# FINE ARTS WORK CENTER

*Reggie Cabral  
with Christopher Busa*

I opened the Atlantic House in 1949. It began as a fishermen's bar. In the course of a lifetime, I have watched the fishing business just disappear, and I have seen the artists get stronger and stronger. It takes a lot to break out and buy a picture. You make a statement. Even the best painters want to know, "Why did you buy my picture?" It's not as if you simply buy something in a shop, take it home, and forget it. It involves another person, the artist. It's very private. And when they understood, the painters often wanted to borrow the picture back. They never feel they have sold something. They always feel, "That's my picture."

I soon learned that every time I bought a painting, I would lose a friend. I didn't want to become known as a collector because it was resented by many of my Provincetown friends who thought I should be loyal to them exclusively. Provincetown is very faithful to the people that it is fond of, which is wonderful. They have always liked Charles Hawthorne, for example, but on an international level, you can't compare Hawthorne to Richard Miller or Carl Friesseke. When we speak of Provincetown painters, where do we place such important painters as Charles Demuth or Alfred Maurer? We conveniently forget that people like Leo Stein and Gertrude Stein spent time here, as did Peggy Guggenheim. In the early Fifties, despite the excitement created by *Forum '49*, the Abstract Expressionists received tremendous opposition from the Art Association and the Beachcombers. They made fun of Hans Hofmann, I guess because Mr. Hofmann spoke English, French, and German all at the same time.

I first learned how to see art from Henry Hensche. He took me through the woods, showed me how to see the landscape, and taught me the technique of painting. Through Henry, I acquired a number of paintings by Charles Hawthorne, but I gave those all away to Walter Chrysler when he opened his museum here, and now they have gone with him to his new museum. My business involved me with the most contemporary art. As soon as word got out that there was jazz at the A-House, and that I was buying pictures,



FRANZ KLINE

UNTITLED

every painter from here to hell was around trying to sell me pictures, including Meara, my wife, who I met when she came in to see me with her etchings. The only way she could get them back was to marry me, she says.

I am a very good businessman. I'm the best, but I never used art as a business. I bought what I liked. In the beginning, nobody was in a hurry. There was time. I always had sketchbooks behind the bar. I have a Claus Oldenburg drawing that he did on a Scott towel. We had a strictly jazz policy at the Atlantic House. Count Basie, Zoot Simms, Gerry Mulligan—they were all there. We had to put all the tables and chairs in the alley, there were so many people. You hear about the Cedar Tavern in New York. They didn't have our charm and out wit. We had jazz; we had what was going on. The Atlantic House was unquestionably the most important bar

in the world. It had the most famous painters, musicians, writers, art dealers, all at one time in one place. They left their troubles in New York and came here. Artists go where they are welcome, where they are not hustled. Everybody would bring different kinds of people, and you had tables for people who were not speaking to one another. It was like a kaleidoscope; it worked, as in geometry, Meara says, because things equal to the same thing are equal to each other. There was never a bar, period, that came close to us. Norman Mailer used to come in here every night, and they used to beat the shit out of him every night. That's factual. We had a policeman named Harmony, and Mailer is the only man Harmony ever put out.

Franz Kline was treated politely. One time he came in and loaded his overcoat with cold Ballantine ales. He was trying to go out of the

door with them, and of course you couldn't let him take them out. But since he was Mr. Kline, we told him, "Mr. Kline, you're dropping your Ballentine ales." I used to get angry because, you know, it is against the law to serve liquor after one o'clock. Everybody had to be out of the bar by one-thirty. The police would come by and shine flashlights in the window. So we used to go into a small kitchen, where the greatest conversations would go on. We'd drink, but it wasn't a party. It was a gathering mostly of artists. I didn't want the writers around, not that I had anything against them. Rather, I was trying to learn about art. When artists gave me a hard time, thinking it was one big hell of a party, and the bottles were coming out like water, which they did, I'd stop them: "Get out! You're not going to be here drinking my drinks!" Then Franz would say, "All right, Reggie, what is it you want to know?" So I would ask him a whole series of questions that were on my mind,

very serious questions. Franz didn't like to talk about painting without coaxing. But two things could coax him: the records of Bessie Smith and booze.

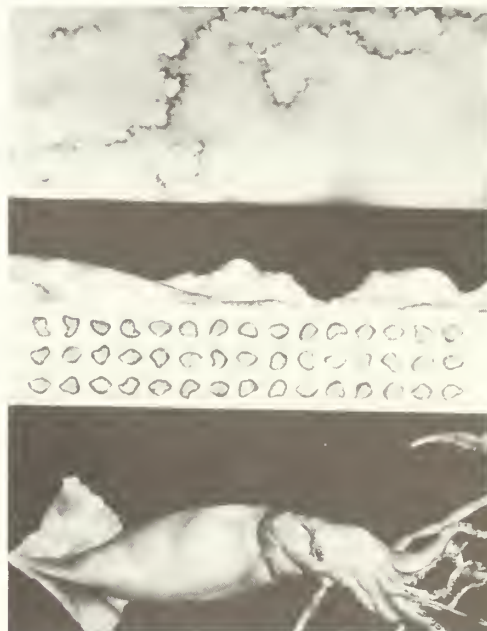
They owed me tremendous bar bills. Franz never had much money, and he always picked up the tab for his group. He loved people, he loved being Mr. Kline, and he loved the glamour of being the painter. He was very generous and kind and warm—a big shit in a group of people. The next day, I might see him in front of Adams' drugstore, dressed in the whitest white shirt, the whitest white shorts, the whitest white sneakers, ready to play tennis. I had just seen him a few hours the night before, and he had gone from black to white, from Franz to Mr. Kline, suddenly very dignified. He told me that even when he painted in black and white he always used a full color palette. There is an insinuation in Fielding Dawson's book, *An Emotional Memoir of Franz Kline*, that Franz was a homosexual. This is wrong. That kind of thing just didn't bother him at all. He was a great and generous human being, that's all. He did say, "The only trouble with lesbians is that they always turn out to be Presbyterians."

If you want to learn about art, get to know the artists. I might go visit Fritz Bultman, and there would be Mark Rothko, David Smith, Jack Tworikov, talking casually. Fritz shared everything he knew with anyone who was interested, myself included. This was in the days before television, in the time of the twist. Myron Stout was at the Atlantic House every night, dancing. He loved to dance. He taught my wife how to do the twist, and he's the only one who ever got her out on the dance floor.

"I was in the crossroad. I wasn't a painter, but I took pleasure in painting. I was married to a painter. I was right in the heart of the Abstract Expressionist period, and I didn't even know it. Then I was in at the beginning of another period that was fun, the Pop period. Once I bought a large Tom Wesselman drawing of a nude, one of his Great American Nudes, and I don't think Jack Tworikov ever forgave me for that. We used the Wesselman in an A-House poster, a picture of me with my back to the camera as I washed the glass on

the ten-foot tall drawing.

There are many good painters in the community now. Paul Resika is very strong. The painter who excels in originality is Selina



CHUCK ANDERSON

DAY SIX

Trieff. A young painter who hits and misses but is strong is Cynthia Packard—her colors remind me of Gauguin in Tahiti.

I have a wonderful collection of artists from the Fine Arts Work Center. I have always bought their work—major pieces. Unfortunately, the Work Center gallery is not big enough in any way, scope, or form to hold what I have. So I am making a small selection, with help from Jim Peters, Paul Bowen, and Sam Hardison. We'll have a big Kline, a big Knaths, a Motherwell tribute to Stanley Kunitz, and many other things by former fellows such as Bowen, Peters, Chuck Anderson, Susan Baker, Mary Armstrong, Stony Conley, Bert Yarborough, Sam Messer—pack it like tight like the early salon shows.

*For many years Reggie Cabral has been an energetic collector and an enthusiastic participant in the Provincetown art community.*



REGGIE CABRAL WASHING THE GLASS ON HIS TOM WESSELMAN DRAWING, "THE GREAT AMERICAN NUDE"

# EXHIBITIONS

## J.L. BECKER GALLERY



ANI ROSSKAM

"DISAPPEARING ACT"

Lots of artists today feel a pressure to define their work in terms that are accessible to the viewer, the collector and the galleries. Unlike literature or film, which we are socialized to understand at an early age the visual world stands alone as a mysterious enigma to most people, and this I am sorry to say is a great misconception. After all we see and look every day and generally we know what we like. Painting is no different from anything else. One either feels something from it or one doesn't. It is as simple as that.

With the growing number of artists today, and the even larger numbers of audiences visiting museums we can trust that art has become a thriving curiosity, or business. With young whippersnapper artists buying second and third vacation homes, the art business has entered the level of the absurd. When you realize what Van Gogh's painting yielded at auction and what little the artist had to live on during his lifetime, it is not hard to think that something has gone askew.

I do have to say that art has to fit into the modern phenomenon as much as anything else does, and as a painter I think about it in very unconscious ways. Like most everyone else today, I have been seduced by film, TV, and photography, in that these media can describe action, time, sequence, narrative, and drama with built-in textures and sensations. These are elements that I have always been attracted to. Because painting is a two dimensional medium that is static and is locked into a strict geometric format, issues such as illusion and action have always signaled red lights for me.

I have discovered that trying to describe a literal idea in paint can dangerously reduce my paintings to an illustration of an idea, rather than allowing the painting to become an idea in itself. Although

I use elements that are my own symbols of, I hope, a growing vocabulary of my own invention, I want my paintings to go beyond a simple duplication of reality. I don't want them to describe time in terms of a frozen moment, but instead to describe the sensation of an ultimate sense of there not being any time at all. I am interested in creating the mood of an idea or a sensation, rather than in describing it specifically.

"I am concerned with the abstract elements in my paintings as much as I am interested in the images that I use. These elements serve not only as structures that stage the events of the paintings, but also as important aspects that in their abstract selves create a sense of tension or drama. A compressed space can be as ominous as an image describing trouble.

"Texture also has become important in my work. It can be used to reveal a material, but, more important, can evoke a memory the way a smell might stir an emotion. Even though some of the elements in my paintings may become rocks or bricks or plants that we know in our everyday lives, they also can become unexpected disruptions in an otherwise serene picture.

"I must admit that my paintings are mysterious to me every time I go into my studio, until by some pure accident an image or a color emerges that finally is the key to my understanding of the picture. It is not until that moment that I feel I am home free."

*Ani Roskam*



MELISSA MEYER

"30 MARCH 1986"

"I see drawing and painting as related activities that feed each other. They are both ways of finding image and form through trying out. It is not interesting for me to know exactly what I am about to do. Once I get something that intrigues me, I stay with it until it 'works.' I determine whether something works based on criteria I have established for myself over

a period. I have never liked a particular work of art because it was realistic or abstract. It is other criteria that interest me.

"This drawing started with marking the surface with the white oil stick and leaving some of the white paper uncovered. Then I added the dark forms on top of both whites. In other cases, I do the reverse: the lights are pulled out of the darks. This drawing is the first of a group done in one session. Each of the series has a geometric element combining with the organic forms. In this instance, I use the triangle. I like to think that the linear lines are dancing."

*Melissa Meyer*



ELLEN LANYON "GOLDEN GATE/STRANGE GAMES"

"The approach has always been representational, and source material has been vital to the resolution of an idea. Photographs from family albums, Rotogravure, sports photography, nature guides, objects, and an assortment of diverse printed matter constitute the inanimate inspiration, while aviaries, conservatories, humans, animals, and natural environments provide living stimulants."

"Somehow, and from the earliest works, a sense of the amazing phenomena of life as it manifests itself through cause and effect has permeated the imagery, often making the results seem to be a studied surrealism or metaphysical remark. Perhaps so, but the initial concept was to illustrate the magical process of metamorphosis and transformation that occurs once an initial life process has begun. The dramas of the micro-scape, as it expands to constitute the macro-landscape in a multitude of situations, become the theme.

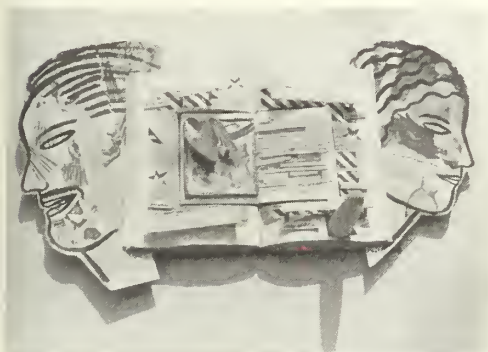
"When one conceives of and creates an image,

## DAVID BROWN GALLERY

a theater on the page, one brings into existence a set and predictable narrative. Observation of behavior in the natural world reassures one of the predictability of plant and animal, bird and insect that qualifies them as ideal subjects for inclusion in the visual drama.

"The intent has always been to attain a likeness of whatever the subject might be; to make the linear descriptive quality of the drawing be as rich as possible, but then, on canvas, to abandon the graphic predominance in lieu of an energetic painterly approach. The earliest paintings were in egg tempera, and that kind of discipline of small brush and detailed line influenced the later works in acrylic, both being aqueous. The interlude of oil as medium introduced a broadness of stroke and viscosity of paint, and, finally, the combination of all three methods of approach has produced a compatible surface where a richness of color and variety of application is a major issue. Since the narrative is essential, it is always the challenge to make the paint as eloquent as the idea."

**Ellen Lanyon**



VALERIE HAMMOND

UNTITLED BOOK PIECE

"The books are a visual correspondence intercepted by the viewer; a talk story composed of pieces from daily life and fragments of dreams."

**Valerie Hammond**



EWA NOGIEC-SMITH

UNTITLED

"So many questions to answer! Is my time different from yours? If yes, my seeing or reality should be different. If not, why don't we see the same? You want to see things familiar to you. I want the unrecognizable, with languages unknown; where time is necessary to find a message or questions or just to find what it is. Is death unknown? What about life? If black is the color of dying, should white be reserved for birth?"

**Ewa Nogiec-Smith**



GRANT DRUMHELLER

SKETCH FOR "SURVIVOR"

"I am most concerned with formal issues: organization, light, color, form, space. I work without models, and the resulting images present a paradox to me. It's as though I were an author of an unfolding story that must remain a mystery. The figures are mostly in positions of struggle or out of control, at odds or in concert with nature. The process of conjuring images stands as a totem to my work: I paint by my memory and instinct, and trust the results."

**Grant Drumheller**



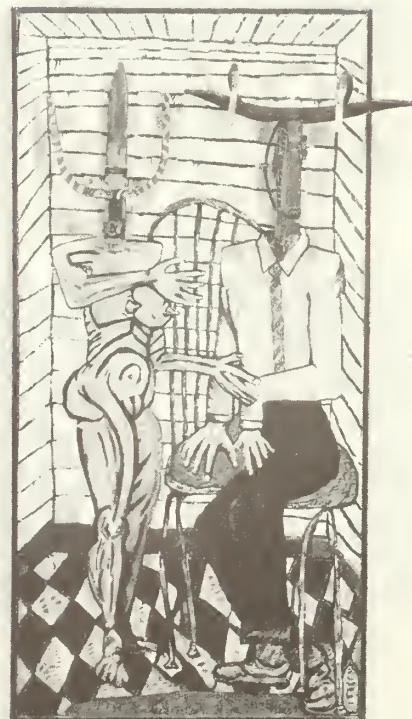
GINA FIEDEL

UNTITLED

"I look for photographs that interest me and use them when they seem right. This gives me distance from the subject matter, a depersonalization that allows a layering of meanings to occur. The paintings are the second generation of ideas that I may or may not be sympathetic to, so contradiction is always present."

"It's a recycling of images that have become familiar. As we glance at them, knowing their purpose before we've even looked, we turn the page, absorbing the information without thought. The emotions they depict are cliché and burdened with assumption, yet they are part of our daily lives."

**Gina Fiedel**



BREWSTER LUTTRELL "RETURN OF THE SWEET LIFE"

"When I was six years old, I was hit by a car and thrown twenty feet in the air and forty feet away from the place I had been standing just moments

# EXHIBITIONS

## DEBERRY GALLERY

before. It was my first experience in the air, but not my last. And it not only gave me my earliest recollection of that timid youth, but also placed the unholy burden of my own mortality and individual consciousness within my soul. Being close to death is no way to grow up, and the philosophical appendage of questions on existence (attached to the clock springs of a child who, theretofore, had been asking, 'Dad, why doesn't the sun eat the earth?' and, 'Mom, why this, why that, why not?') became questions of deeper consequence, much too early for one so young, when questions and answers should be kept simple. So, my questions to others came less frequently, and thoughts of myself geared to complicated wheels of life and the BIG IDEAS. BIG IDEAS are various, and entertained by almost everyone at one time or another; and these ideas, and our conclusions and social conditioning (I came to understand, much later in life, and far too late to do me any real good), are the threads of the human social fabric. This is well and fine, it seemed to me, except that most of what people thought or think the universe is made of, how it works, where it is going with them in it, and where they will go after they are no longer going anywhere in it—are completely laughable, tragic, confusing, and regressive embryos of the BIG IDEA. No wonder mankind has built a world house out of bricks and neuroses and religious fanaticism, of nationalistic walls and roofs of economic class and struggle! I decided to remain an observer, and to chronicle my impressions of how our world house is being lived in. To be an artist, and to translate how I see religion, business, politics, family life and relationships, moving within the mechanics of the BIG IDEA is how I move within the BIG IDEA, and it returns me to sweet life."

**Brewster Luttrell**



ANDREW V. STEVOVICH

"I find paintings should be like mirrors; mirrors that stay much clearer, and reflect more, without the intrusion of the artist's verbal explanations. Good paintings should not require many words for support."

**Andrew V. Stevovich**



JEAN KENT "TIGER AND WOMAN IN JUNGLE"

"Some of my paintings are of past experiences. One is of a 100-mile trip I took on foot through the South American jungle to see and photograph the wild Indians. The painting is of an Indian house, the Indians with bows and arrows and us approaching up the stream bed.

"The oil painting shown here is called 'Tiger and Woman in Jungle.' The tiger is shown (rather than the native jaguar) as a symbol of strength and wildness belonging to the jungle. The face of the tiger is partly the animal and partly me. The colors are hot—orange, red, purple, and some green in the background to give the feel of the jungle."

**Jean Kent**



NANNO de GROOT "WHITE NUDE"

"No one can understand something he doesn't like. Not liking it, he can't become intimate enough to understand. Therefore, one can't sensibly criticize

something one doesn't like because not understanding the thing to be criticized means not knowing what one is talking about. Critics should keep that in mind."

**Nanno de Groot**



PETER SHULMAN "SOLDIERS"

"The concept behind my work is to instill in the viewer enough impetus to begin reflective thought. Each piece is begun with a very detailed drawing. As I paint I remove unnecessary detail to reveal the hard central core of each subject I paint.

"Above my work space is a quote from Picasso: 'While others talk I work.' This is the work ethic that helps me put brush to canvas each day of the year.

"When people pass my work they stop and look. Whether they like what they see is a matter of personal taste. The fact that they stop and think means that I've achieved my goal."

**Peter Shulman**



JOAN PEREIRA "MISTRESS"

"I've always admired the portrait painters of the Revolutionary period, and I especially admire John Stuart. The portrait he did of his mistress is one of

## JACOB-FANNING

my favorites. I decided to go back in time and to experience what he thought and felt about his sitter. It was a wonderfully sensual experience."

*Joan Pereira*

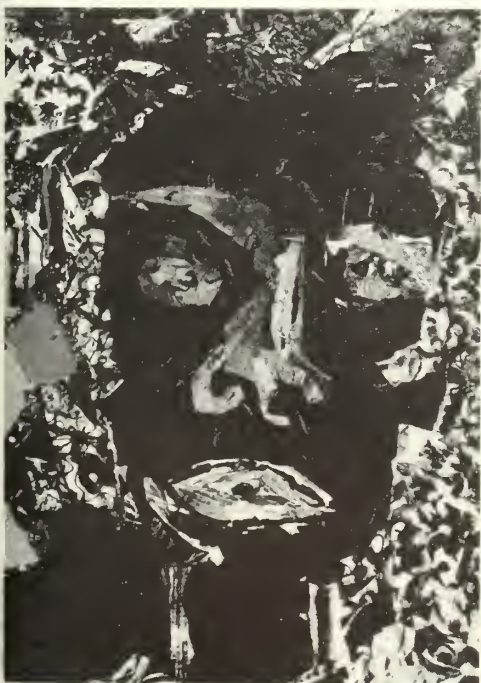


TABITHA VEVERS

"LOVE UNBOUND"

"Painting, for me, is a way of defining an emotional experience. Beyond that, it is gratifying when a piece hits a viewer beneath the surface and gets him or her to respond on an emotional level before responding intellectually. I think of the paintings on wood and cement as personal icons and hope that they evoke an inner search in the way that religious icons inspired a spiritual quest."

*Tabitha Vevers*



BETHUAL JAMISON

"SELF PORTRAIT"



EMILY FARNHAM

"ZEBRA CORRAL"

"Briefly stated, my intention in painting is to evoke the aesthetic experience by creating a resolution of the abstract form of a given work; that is, by leading the eye back into, and up out of, a vitalized, dynamic kind of negative space. I believe the expansion up and out of illusory space to be the ultimate visual experience, one comparable to the dissolution of architectural form at the ceiling of a Baroque church, and to religious ecstasy.

"Beginning to paint at the Cleveland School of Art during the year I was seventeen, like other American artists during the early part of the century I was captivated by the factor of likeness in art, by realism. And my fascination with realism continued through the year I was twenty-two, when I earned my M.A. degree in painting at Ohio State University. However, the effects of the School of Paris and the Armory Show were gradually being felt, even in our Midwest, and during the five years I taught painting and drawing at Southern Illinois University (partly as a result of using Erle Loran's book *Cezanne's Composition* as a text in one of my courses), I became increasingly interested in such abstract factors as Mondrian's sensitive use of proportion, the importance of quality in both foreground and background shapes, the plastic-dynamic structure. Intellectually, for years I was searching for what I sensed to be a least common denominator of form, a key to the factor beyond realism that informs great painting. This led to my study with Hofmann in Provincetown and New York in 1949, 1950, and 1953. Hofmann taught me to see abstract space for the first time (that is, space created by abstract means, as opposed to Renaissance perspective-induced space). And I began to understand dynamic form.

"My current intention in painting would have been foreign to most 19th century artists, who were still in thrall to the Renaissance and Baroque ideal of likeness, of realistic objects depicted as though seen through a window. Twentieth century painting and its many schools resulted from the slow emergence during the late 1900's of a recognition of the importance of the picture plane, a process that began with Courbet and climaxed with Cezanne and Cubism. Artists began to understand that the ma-

jor factor in painting is the tangible flatness of the plane, all else being merely a matter of illusion.

"Unfortunately, the rediscovery of the plane, with its accompanying emphasis on geometric form, coupled with the emergence of photography as an art, not only freed painters from a concern with representation: it also freed them from the discipline of academic drawing, and led eventually to the complete avoidance of discipline that by 1987 has produced a strange variety of chaos, a late 20th century malaise reminiscent of Mannerism. And, in the midst of aesthetic chaos, monetary greed appears to have usurped the place of the painter's traditional lifelong struggle toward the production of great painting."

*Emily Farnham*



ROGER PONTBRIAND

"BEACHED"

"I started out, a long time ago, trying to paint Cape Cod. I attempt to express visually how I feel emotionally about a place. I hope these emotions are represented in my work. Wellfleet contains all the visual delights I like to paint. The beaches, the rolling dunes, the marshes, the inlets, and the boats around Wellfleet are familiar images that represent the entire Cape.

"The scenes I choose to paint are easily recognized, but my abstract style, at first glance, makes them appear unnatural. I attempt to paint the natural sequencing of shapes that form the landscape. This style offers the viewer the continual excitement of an image that is finite."

*Roger Pontbriand*

# EXHIBITIONS

## EAST END GALLERY

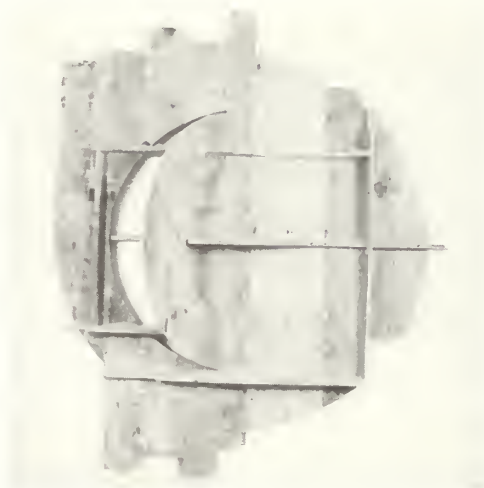


CARL TASHA

FROlicking LADIES

"There is a difference between singing in the shower and singing on the stage. The difference is in the idea of sharing the experience. This is the point of art in its highest sense. The artist is enthralled, and other people can, if they choose, share this. Fine art is a shared religious experience. An artist becomes a holy man or a priest. He has a communion. He gives up his self-identification. He gives up responsibility for what he is doing. He is infused with the holy spirit. It is the goal of any artist to transcend human limitations, and the only way he can do that is to give up his humanity— at least temporarily. I'm afraid there is no way around it. That's the reality that the artist has to deal with. He has to tell the truth, not be responsible. How can you tell the truth if you don't give up responsibility?"

**Carl Tasha**



PAUL BOWEN

HIRAETHUM

"Three or four years ago, I made some shelves for our kitchen. There weren't enough long pine boards around, so I joined a number of small ones together. I used several kinds of joints; after the glue dried, I ground down the boards to unify the surfaces. Later, I made a sculpture stand using similar but more complex joinery. My current sculpture is made the same way, using just about any wood that's plentiful, like fragments of fish boxes, scrap ply, and old floor boards.

**Paul Bowen**



PATRICK WEBB

LIFEGUARD MISTY DAY

"My paintings over the past few years have been of groups of figures. The setting and/or narrative is the catalyst. It defines the formal dynamics. As the structure develops the character of the shapes, rhythms of the space and intensity of the color specify the meaning of the image. Some paintings are of New York: fires, battles, and street scenes. Other paintings are of beaches: people exercising, passing by, or bunched beneath an umbrella. What remains constant is a certain attitude towards it all."

**Patrick Webb**



JAMES HANSEN

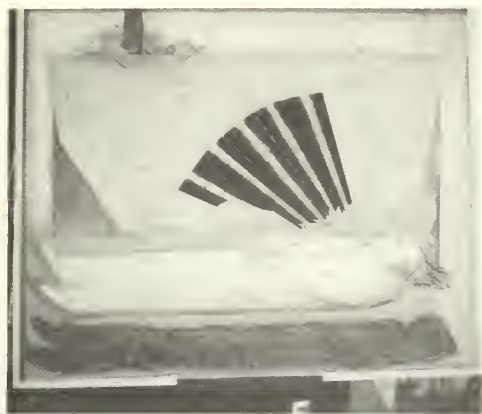
UNTITLED

*Notes toward a statement*

- A contrast of sources between cultural references and the very patterns within my shapes.
- The use of multiple light sources, the play of fore- and background.
- I feel that looking at an ancient Coptic tapestry is the same as looking at the stylized stripes of Frank Stella.
- There is a strong interest between bringing a flat surface to the front while playing against a painterly illusionistic background.
- The shapes fitting together in my paintings is maybe a statement on fitting together the pieces in my own life.
- I think also that the act of painting is important unto itself, as if painting had a narrative content. The painting itself respects the act itself, the finished object remains an action.

**James Hansen**

## LONG POINT GALLERY



EDWARD GIOBBI

"I'm doing a series of levitating figures. I started the recent series last spring, after I went to Italy to visit my mother and my uncle, who had been very kind to me when I was living in Italy. He had no children, and he treated me like a son. When I went to see him, I arrived on Easter Sunday, an hour after he had died. My cousins were dressing him. In Italy, in the country, the men wash and dress the male deceased. They don't send them to funeral parlors, and the tradition has nothing to do with money. The dead are buried the next day, after being stretched out for visitors to view them—new shirt, new suit. They put his felt hat on the pillow next to him, as if he were going off on a trip. The front of the hat was facing the wall. It reminded me of the stirrups that were facing the back of the horse, the black riderless horse that followed the Kennedy hearse through the streets of Washington. The saddle was empty but the stirrups were facing the opposite way. That's what that hat reminded me of. It was very touching. My aunt asked me what I thought of having him photographed. I told her I had never seen a photograph of a dead man that looked good. I said, 'Why don't I make a drawing of him?' They got the local paper store to open its doors. I got the supplies I needed, big sheets of paper. I made thirteen big drawings. I gave them all to my relatives. I didn't keep one for myself. I spent two days drawing, delighted to draw him, because I didn't have to get involved with meeting relatives and crying. It gave me a wonderful opportunity to be a part of it, yet to keep away from it. While I was drawing, I noticed what happens to a human being after he dies. Immediately after—when I first got there, he was still warm—he still had a little bit of color in his hands; but after a while, they flattened out. I don't know what happens, but they got flatter. Also, the shoulders went up. I wanted to check the pose, so I had a model lie down, and her shoulders went down. But with the dead, the shoulders rise. And the head sinks in a little bit. I was able to notice all these subtle changes that take place immediately after death. Also, there is a tremendous amount of energy that seems to surround the dead. There was an awful amount of life

around him, and in him, even though his heart had stopped. You could almost see it. The experience was sad, but it was not depressing and it certainly was not morbid. It was beautifully sad.

"I have been painting death themes for decades, yet it was a beautiful experience to sit there in Italy for hours beside the bed of my dead uncle and watch the energy rise from his body like a spirit leaving him; to watch it, to see it, then to paint it. All the mirrors in the room were covered with white gauze, so that nothing would reflect in them."

**Edward Giobbi**



SIDEO FROMBOLUTI

"ENTERTAINER WAITING"

"For five days out of the week I paint, with or without inspiration. The other two days, I do nothing—watch the Mets if they are playing."

**Sideo Fromboluti**



TONY VEVERS

"IPHEGENIA"

"The change and experimentation of the last dozen years seems to have come to fruition in my work at this point. Idea and image work together—as they did for me, in a different context, thirty years ago."

**Tony Vevers**



SIDNEY SIMON

"SCHUYKILL MAIDEN AND THE DELAWARE RIVER GOD"

"After a long stint of ecclesiastical commissions, it was a great relief to be asked to do a fountain. I have designed a number of fountains that were never finalized, so this particular commission was really the first of its kind for me. It is located in the lobby of the Graham Building in Philadelphia, opposite city hall. It is a life-size playful Venus on the half shell, spilling water at the twice life-size head of the Delaware River God, which surfaces and spews water back at the Schuylkill Maiden. In spite of the fountain's lighthearted, playful appearance, I had to enlist and coordinate the behind-the-scenes help of engineers, water experts, plumbers, and lighting experts before the piece was ready for the final installation. One of the problems that had to be solved in the studio and then carefully adjusted in the installation was that the level height of the six lips of the half shell, over which the water had to flow, had to be regulated to within a sixteenth of an inch, in order to maintain the even flow of water. Since the Philadelphia installation, I've decided to make a variation of the fountain and to experiment with a different casting material that will show the fountain in a different way. Maybe the look of Wellfleet oysters had something to do with it.

"At this time I'm busy working and planning two more large fountain sculptures and, at the same time, working on a medal for the arts to be given by the French Academy. It is only going to be four inches in diameter. When this is not going on, I work on further 'Mirror Series' sculptures and steal ideas from my two youngsters, who always seem to be my source of what's cooking in the '80's."

**Sidney Simon**

# EXHIBITIONS

## EVA DE NAGY GALLERY



EVA DE NAGY

"A PASTEL"

"After I had my studio built overlooking the bay, my work began to reflect this beautiful sight, the change of the colors, the mood of the water and the sky—no other place like it."

*Eva De Nagy*

## PROVINCETOWN GROUP GALLERY



RICHARD E. SMITH

UNTITLED

"Some years ago, in frustration at not being able to make a painting work, I cut it up into strips and wove them randomly. The result was so surprising to me that I began cutting and weaving all sorts of two-dimensional images. The most satisfying were done with small black and white targets normally used in rifle practice. My recent drawings, which only imply interlacing, were done from those small weavings."

*Richard E. Smith*

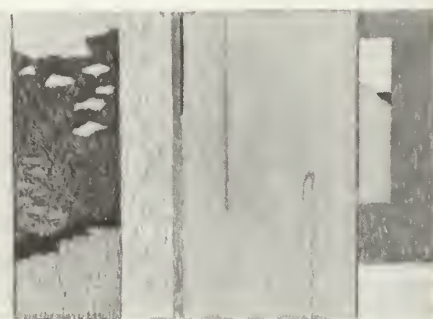


MARGARET GRIMES "LATE LIGHT PROVINCETOWN"

"My paintings express an involvement with long distance sea and land views (frequently framed by windows and doors), the contrast between formal elements of shape and form, exterior and interior space and light, and their implications of introspection and observation. The intention of the paintings is to describe the intensity of a closely observed,

specific moment in time—the exact light, perhaps, of Provincetown at 4:30 in the afternoon on the 20th of July—while organizing the painting carefully around abstract principles. In addition, I wish to create a mood of mystery and metaphysical implication."

*Margaret Grimes*



JOAN McD MILLER

"DAPHNE'S VIEW"

"I don't know why I paint, but I can't imagine not painting. I like the act of it, the surprise of it, even the frustrations. For several years I have explored the interruption of seascapes and woods by architectural structures, with the idea of showing the ambiguities of perception. I was indoors looking out. Recently I've gone outdoors, as it were, and I find even in the simplest of landscape subjects the juxtaposition of forms that interest me."

*Joan McD Miller*



PETER WATTS

WINTER PINES

"Landscape is the foundation of my paintings. The forms come from memory or dreams. I find certain shapes and ideas repeatedly coming into the paintings, and as a result I tend to work in series."

"I may do some sketching outside, but all the painting is done in the studio looking only at the painting and not at the subject. The paint is put on in layers, sometimes working into wet oil paint, or after the painting has dried for weeks or months. I like to think that a light comes out of the color 'on

the edge of mud'; that colors are mixed on the canvas and the light that emerges is the result of repeatedly changing these colors. This is where the mud comes in. Sometimes a marvelous light is achieved and sometimes I end up with mud. When this is the case I just start all over again.

"Abstract Expressionism has had a lasting influence on me. I would like the viewer to be aware of the paint, paint as pigment applied with a brush on canvas, a direct approach. My paintings are simple condensations. The subject gets less and less important, light is emphasized through the use of colored pigment."

*Peter Watts*



JOHN WALLACE

"COSMIC FURNACE"

"For several years I've been working on a series of drawings and paintings that have incorporated seemingly disparate images; items of scientific equipment, forms from nature and the human figure, artists' equipment, machines used for space exploration, fragments of architecture: the trace elements of civilization.

"I have become especially interested in recent research in astrophysics, and in the merging of this area with the greater field of cosmology. New insights are opening into the nature of matter, the forces that exist between its constituent parts, and the basis of life itself. The obsession with astronomical elements runs through art history from the Bayeux Tapestry, Giotto's paintings, the analytical drawings of Leonardo da Vinci, and Vincent Van Gogh's highly accurate 'starmap' paintings of night skies.

"I have been working with images generated

through my own and others' astronomical observations, and my experience in photography and physics, to find meaningful relationships between them."

*John Wallace*



NANCY WEBB

"AGAMEMNON"

"My work is derived from natural forms: animal (including the human), insect, fish (including the crustaceans), and vegetable. In the process of transforming these creatures into bronze (for me, a marvelously living material), they are modified, changed, as though to present an additional order of life. Quite often I use dead forms: skulls, skeletons, dried flowers, or bodies of insects. But my interest is not simply in the fact that they are dead, leftover, but also in the mysterious power that is retained within these intricate structures. A friend once said of my work that it was "a dream of nature." I would agree as long as among the dreams would be included the nightmare.

"I wrote this about my work twenty years ago, and it remains essentially true today. However, since bronze casting has become more expensive, and I am working much larger, I have had to turn to plaster-for-bronze, or other less costly materials, including wood, fiber, string, cord, glue, and fabric, which sometimes have released new formal ideas. I should add that the nightmare has increasingly dominated."

*Nancy Webb*

## TENNYSON GALLERY



SIMIE MARYLES

UNTITLED

"On the most fundamental level, I enjoy the feel of paint or pastel. I enjoy the sensation of dragging or gliding or dotting or smashing a piece of pigment onto a clean white surface. I think that's why I've always painted and continue to paint.

"I always work with music, and sometimes I think the rhythm of whatever I'm listening to affects the glide or staccato quality of my strokes. I think the music also helps keep my mind focussed and doesn't allow me to be overly intellectual about what I'm doing. It seems that the best work I've done sort of flows out as a combination of what I know and my response to what I'm seeing and feeling, in a realm rather apart from the intellect.

"When I'm outside before nature, painting a landscape, the most important part of the painting is 'seeing' it with great clarity, before I even touch a color. After that I sometimes take a deep breath—and go. When everything is clicking, I often lose track of myself completely, and when the painting is good it's as if someone else painted it. I can't imagine how I ever did it. That's great fun."

*Simie Maryles*



KATE BURKE

"THE BEGINNING"

"I am intrigued by the point of change, the moments that entice and impel me. Perhaps it is the glimpse of the ocean that begs me to seek its wholeness, or the curve in the path that lures me forward, or the thicket that shows me where I am stuck. It is in

# EXHIBITIONS

situations in which I reveal my hopes and fears that I see myself most clearly.

"Working three-dimensionally, I have added shadow and light to my palette. As the technique is new to me, the exhilaration of discovery is a part of each piece. I enjoy fine tuning the process so that it is continually more sensitive to me. The technical problem solving is my beginning framework, the arbor for the growth of my feelings and ideas. The process makes me grow, and being aware of it all is a wondrous involvement with life."

**Kate Burke**



ROMANOS RIZK ONE WITH THE TAO 720

As the search to understand myself, and the realities of life, changed and developed, my painting followed. Interest in the workings of the mind led me to conclude that developing the art meant developing the man. Creative action is related to all action in life, whether it be artistic or otherwise. It is spontaneous action that is the result of awareness and clarity.

Eastern philosophy and oriental art, over the years, have had strong influences on my work. In Zen, there is an expression, 'Beginner's Mind,' which means to always be like a beginner. This is important for the creative process. Beginner's Mind means an alert and quiet mind free of conditioning and open to all possibilities. In this state of mind, there is no thought of success, and so no fear of failure. When there is no fear of failure, there is freedom, and one's action is flowing and spontaneous. Knowledge is necessary, but the expert's

mind is limited to what it knows and has experienced. In Beginner's Mind the possibilities are limitless."

**Romanos Rizk**



DAVID ZEIGLER UNTITLED

"When I was fifteen, I lived in Puerto Rico with my family. I was fascinated by the sugar cane harvests. On a windless day, when the field hands set a fire to clear the undergrowth, I was there with my watercolors. Later, I traveled to Latin America, where I painted marketplaces, Mayan ruins, coastlines—I feasted on the vivid colors.

"Presently I am concentrating on a series of paintings of the Mill Pond in Marstons Mills, and on a number of large paintings of the bluffs overlooking Provincetown's Pilgrim Lake."

**David Zeigler**

## TIDE & TIME GALLERY



ILONA ROYCE-SMITHKIN UNTITLED

"I believe the artist is a storyteller, a protagonist of the future, and a recorder of the present, who adapts information and technology to tell a story. I have experienced enough of the horrors of life and choose to record what I see as positive and beautiful."

**Ilona Royce-Smithkin**



ELSPETH HALVORSEN

**'FOR MY DAUGHTERS OF THE MOON'**

"In the sixties, my imagery came from my concern with the effects of nature upon the spirit of man,

## WEDNESDAYS

particularly the effect of weather and time. I used manmade materials etched by sea and wind. Gradually with age (or maturity), my perspective changed through a growing awareness of the abysmal state of our world at war, and of the enormity of human suffering. This led to my exploration of space as an image in itself, and to a search for a way to express the duality of time: past/future, life/death. I want to make images that are consoling by being in tune with the forces of nature: to create an image of consolation through the imagination."

*Elspeth Halvorsen*



ISAAC ROSE

"Changing Light" is a series of color works inspired by the light in nature at different times of the day. Throughout the work there has been a balance sought between strength and intimacy. The work combines painterly surfaces, color, and landscape textures."

*Isaac Rose*



JOYCE JOHNSON "MAN IN HAT AND CAPE WITH BIRD"

"I work in both realistic and abstract modes, yet in each I seem to find an element of mysticism that I found once while living in Madrid, Spain."

*Joyce Johnson*



ROZ SMITH

UNTITLED

"Through my painting I attempt to express the magic of how land and sea, rooftops and trees, meet the sky. I love to watch the horizon as it disappears in the haze of summer heat or impending fog. This is when that magic makes our visual world disappear into infinity."

*Roz Smith*



JOSEPH T. PATRICK

UNTITLED

"I am presently using photography as a medium to show glimpses of reality not often noticed by the casual observer. I endeavor to help people re-see, refocus, and rediscover parts of their environment from an alternative perspective."

"Currently, my work is un-croded, un-zoomed, and unmodified by camera or darkroom techniques. In doing this, I hope that people realize the possibilities of a greater appreciation of their world as it exists."

*Joseph T. Patrick*

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*Conrad Malicoat*



CONRAD MALICOAT

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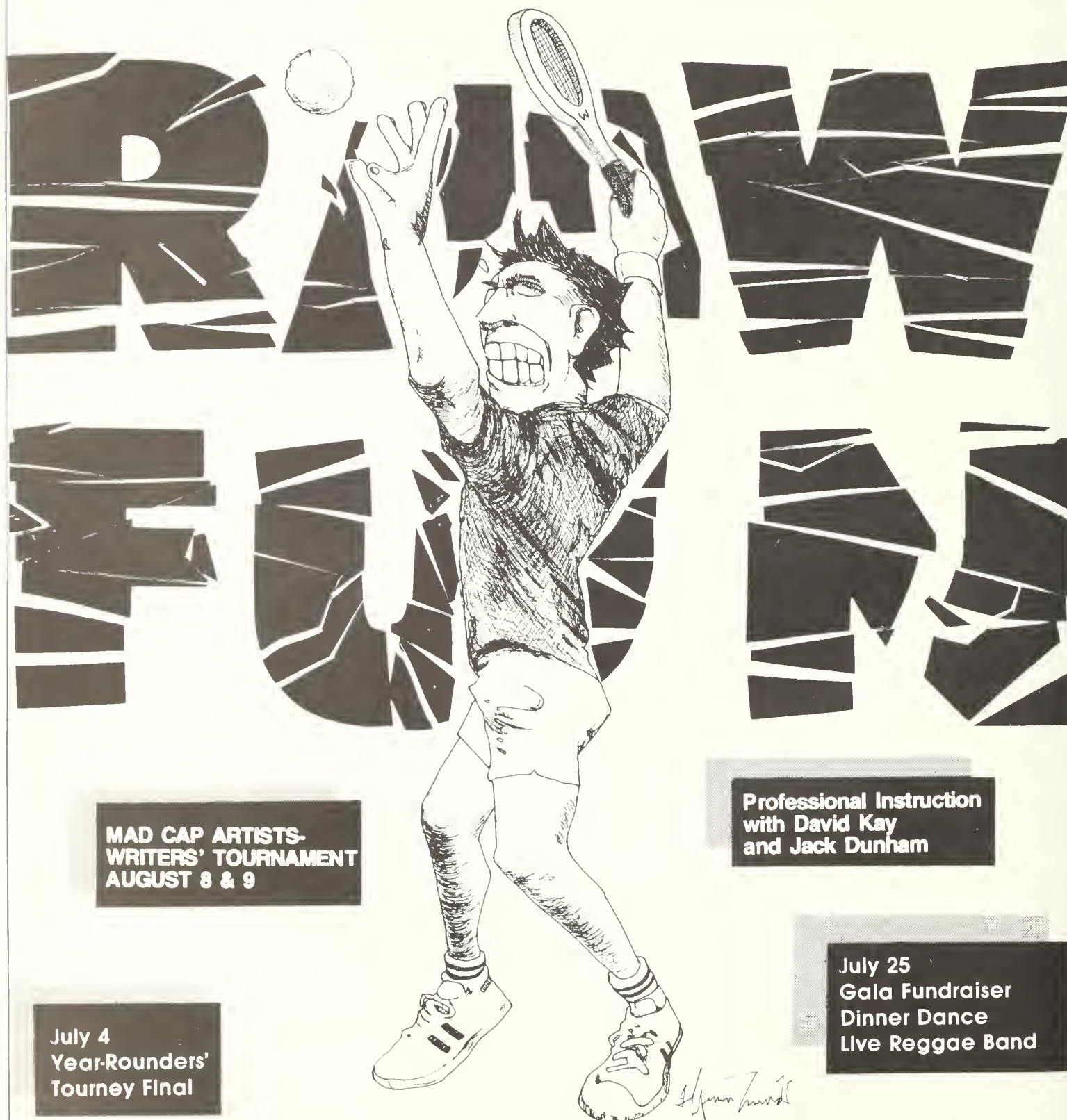
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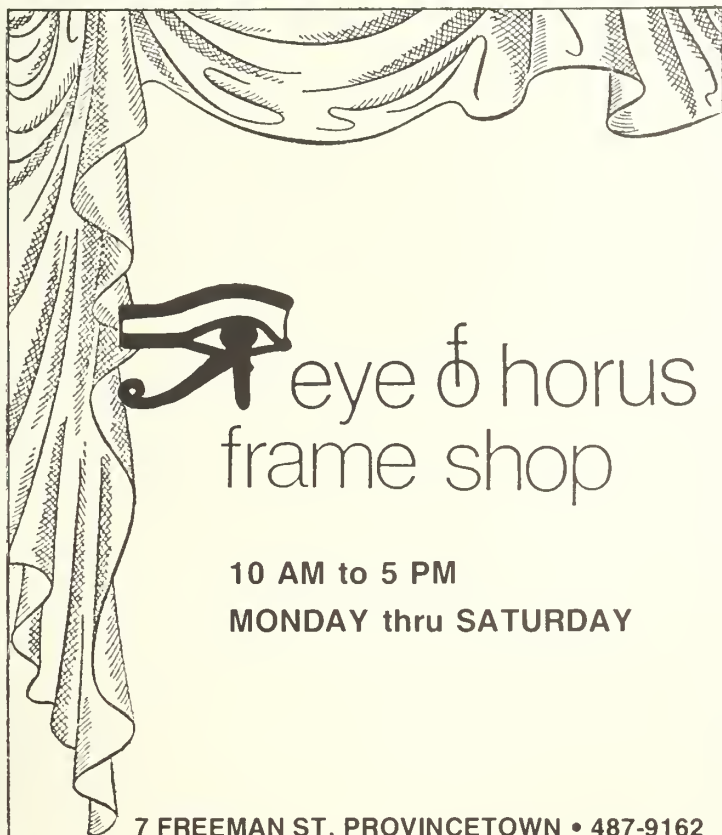
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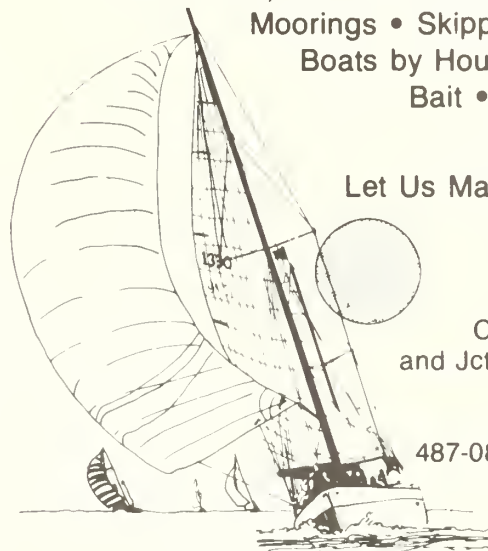
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# BONNIE BARBER

(Continued from page 20)

and Stage Employees (IATSE), which accused Cannon of unfair labor practices for hiring non-union workers at lower salaries. The strike halted filming for two days while negotiations between the union and Cannon were hammered out in Los Angeles. Through it all, Mailer maintained remarkably upbeat and calm, even as his film came perilously close to shutting down when it appeared that an arrangement would never be reached between the two factions. "Anything can go wrong at any moment on a movie," Mailer said, afterward, of his calm exterior in the face of potential disaster. "If you're not prepared for that, you're not being realistic. And you're also going to have a nervous breakdown." By subscribing to a Hindu saying, "Only worry about those things that you can change," Mailer side-stepped his problems and never let his enthusiasm ebb.

Although Mailer repeatedly stressed that the movie was not about Provincetown, this didn't preclude his sharing his enthusiasm with the people who live there. "I wanted to use townspeople for extras because the making of the movie had much more to do with Provincetown than the final result will. We were in the town using the town's facilities, and we had working relations with a great many townspeople. That was one of the pleasures of making the movie. That part was swell," Mailer said in an interview after filming had wrapped in mid-December.

An enormous casting call was held at the Provincetown Group Gallery in late October, to find Outer Cape residents with the right Provincetown look. Mailer was seeking extras for a Provincetown bar scene and for a party scene filmed at his brick house on Commercial Street. Wholesome-looking Southern types, which the local casting director said she had difficulty finding in Provincetown, were also sought for a North Carolina church scene.

Provincetown's local color is probably best illustrated in a scene filmed at the Old Colony Tap, a bar that Mailer and his gang of friends regularly haunted in the late 1950's. Although a cadre of professional actors was shipped down from Boston for the scene, in late November, half of the thirty extras used were from Provincetown. Among those providing local color were artists Jackson Lambert and Frank Milby, and Eric Peters, the host of WOMR-FM's *Crossroads* show, who chatted with O'Neal about the actor's film experiences with director Stanley Kubrick.

Two Provincetown residents in that scene who didn't have to endure the casting cattle call were Philip Alexander, 81, and Joe "Ducky" Perry, 83. The two have been friends for over seventy-five years, growing up together in the East End, attending school together, and joining the Provincetown Fire Department together. Mailer has known them both for about twenty-five years, and asked

the two former fishermen to play the two gnarled fishermen who greet each other sardonically at the beginning of the scene. Alexander had no prior acting experience, and Perry's lone stint under the lights had been in a minstrel show fifty years earlier. Yet it was a perfect casting choice by Mailer. Although neither really resembles a crusty Portuguese fisherman, as described in the book, and two professional actors could have gotten through each part's single line with greater ease than Perry and Alexander (who required six takes), Mailer was adamant about having these two life-long Provincetown residents and friends in his movie. And it was obviously one of the biggest thrills of these two men's lives. "My grandson has asked me when I'm going to Hollywood now so that he can go with me," an elated Perry said a few days after his screen debut.

While Provincetown residents pride themselves on not being impressed much by fame or fortune, the star quality surrounding *Tough Guys Don't Dance* made remaining blasé difficult for even the most stoic natives. Sightings of actress Farrah Fawcett, O'Neal's girlfriend, in the A & P Market, dominated conversation in Town Hall, and movie gossip was often interspersed through the more official town business of Provincetown's boards and committees. Two crusty fishermen, leaving MacMillan Wharf, even got into the stargazing act one foggy afternoon. Spotting acting newcomer Debra Sandlund walking onto the wharf for a photo session, one of the fishermen leaned out the window and yelled, "Hey! Aren't you that movie star?" Sandlund, eager to please her newly-found public, replied that yes, she was. Amazing how quickly stardom comes after you've just had your picture on the front page of the local paper, the doe-eyed blonde actress must have been thinking. "Yeah, I thought I recognized you," the fisherman told a beaming Sandlund as he showed her some of the day's catch in the back of his truck. "You're that Farrah Fawcett, aren't you?"

Sandlund, who had previously appeared in one *A-Team* episode and the *Dreamgirl U.S.A.* television beauty pageant, attended the Cannes Film Festival to promote *Tough Guys Don't Dance* with Mailer. Mailer was also a member of the nine-person Cannes Festival jury. Although critics were reticent about praising Mailer's film after its May 16 screening at Cannes, they didn't completely pan it. Jay Carr, film critic for the *Boston Globe*, called *Tough Guys* "a classic bad movie—lurid, violent, filled with wonderfully rancid dialogue that sounds as if it were buried with Raymond Chandler and only recently exhumed." Carr also said he feels the film has a "shot of becoming the *Rocky Horror Show* of the film noir set." Jack Matthew, critic for the *Los Angeles Times*, had lukewarm feelings about the film, according to *USA Today*. "It's just bad enough to be enjoyable," Matthews said. "It keeps you guessing when you're supposed to laugh. I think he was after a *Prizzi's Honor* black comedy but he doesn't have the

skills to do it."

The only actors receiving accolades from the critics were Sandlund and Lawrence Tierney, a cantankerous Hollywood veteran who made his name in *Dillinger*, and who was seen in Provincetown continuously scowling, a crossword puzzle in hand. Carr calls Tierney the "best thing" in the film, while Roger Ebert gushed all over Sandlund in his syndicated column. Limiting his review of the film to one sentence—calling it "sort of a Provincetown version of *Blood Simple*"—Ebert said the movie features "a front-burner performance by a sexy and outrageous newcomer named Debra Sandlund."

The real critics—moviegoers—will not be able to give their opinions of the film until this fall. Even if *Tough Guys* fizzles at the box office, Mailer has already been trying to increase his chances for another shot behind the camera. He has been spotted around New York in recent months, having power lunches with people such as director Oliver Stone, who has a tremendous amount of studio clout because of the success of *Platoon*, and with a number of high-powered producers. Mailer has made no secret of his desire to continue directing, interspersing film work with writing. At the completion of filming, Mailer said the ideal situation would be to write a book one year and to direct a film the next. "It's probably the most satisfying experience I've ever had in work," Mailer said of directing. "That doesn't mean I'm that good at it. It just means I enjoy it that much."

At his press conference at Cannes, Mailer expounded further. "Whether *Tough Guys* is very good, good, or not good, I had a marvelous time because I felt like a director. I felt authentic to myself for the first time in my life, as if this is what I was born to do."

Born to direct or not, only time, box office receipts, and video sales will tell if Mailer returns strictly to the solitude of writing, or alternates that solitude with the frenzied atmosphere of a movie set.

*Bonnie Barber was the only journalist in the universe who had unlimited access to the cast, crew, and set of Tough Guys Don't Dance. Bonnie is a freelance journalist living in Wellfleet. In addition, she is a talented tennis player who is entered in the upcoming Maryland Virginia Slims professional women's tournament.*

# GREGORY KATZ

(Continued from page 21)

tension, to be sure, and some of the actors grumbled; but Ryan O'Neal, an old-time Mailer boxing buddy, enjoyed the give and take. When Mailer asked O'Neal to read the *Tough Guys* script and consider playing Tim Madden, O'Neal was ready.

"I liked Tim Madden, and I was proud Norman thought of me for him," said O'Neal in the middle of the shoot. "I felt if he could bite this off, then I would help him. I thought I'd be an asset to him, since I have a lot of experience. Norman's always intrigued me. I've read all his work, and I had never been to Cape Cod. It turns out Norman's a lot like Stanley Kubrick. You get that same sort of careful, literary, intellectual thought process going through his mind at all times. Lots of times, he wanted to make a change, but by the time he approached us he forgot what was wrong. Instead, he'd say, 'I don't know: it's something I feel in my stomach,' and that's all he has to tell me. And I don't know what it was, but I know we've got to do it again."

O'Neal said Mailer was operating under an incredibly tight shooting schedule, but still remained relaxed. "He's rough in the sense that he's dictatorial, he's demanding, yet this is his first picture, and he treats us like he's been in the picture business all his life. This is the toughest schedule I've ever had, and he's not the least bit nervous about it. We've had a couple of run-ins, but nothing serious. He's more demanding than most directors because he's very, very specific about performance. Most directors don't know how to direct actors, but he has an Actors Studio background, and he spends a lot of time observing. He writes very strong dialogue, very natural; it's very easy to say the lines. We're always teasing him—who wrote this shit?—but he's a dream, to tell you the truth."

Mailer sounded realistic when discussing his movie skills. He sees himself as strong with actors and weak on visuals, so he said he relied heavily on his cinematographer to give the movie its look.

"The reason there is no fear in this is because you're surrounded by very good people," he said. "You're really buttressed by knowledge and talent and high competence, so you don't have to do it all yourself. In effect, you're the social director of an aesthetic enterprise. It requires a variety of skills, and directors don't have to possess all of them. Ideally, the great directors possess just about all of the skills, but coming late to it I never will, and I have no illusions about it. I come to directing from the theatrical side, so that my natural skill, if I have one, is to work with actors. I enjoy that a great deal, and I think I'm fairly good at it. On the visual side, I don't really have much more competence than any other person who spent a great deal of his life loving art and loving movies."

Not surprisingly, he thinks he's a better author than a director: "I don't believe I could

ever become a director of the same measure that I am as a writer. It's just too late. I think you have to spend your young years on film. But I think what I can do is bring a small, definite flair to certain kinds of films. When I first started writing novels, I wanted to write like Tolstoy or Dostoyevsky or Hemingway or Thomas Wolfe, but there are so many directors I admire that there are none I want to emulate."

How do the skills complement one another? Does a novelist make a good screenwriter? Would Mailer have been better off letting someone with more experience adapt *Tough Guys* for the screen? Mailer conceded that there are very few good novelists who have become successful screenwriters. He cites the husband-wife team of John Gregory Dunne and Joan Didion as a rare exception.

"It's hard because screenwriting has almost nothing to do with novel writing; in fact, it's the opposite," said Mailer. "Chris Walken once said a screenplay is like a plumber's manual. It's very hard for novelists—who, after all, decorate their pages—to leave out all that background and write the script as a plumber's manual. You have to think of all types of things that have nothing to do with a novel: cuts, where a person moves."

Mailer altered the plot considerably, making the role of Police Chief Luther Regency more central, and, in fact, made so many changes he admitted that he would have been "irritated as hell" if another scriptwriter had so butchered his work. Mailer's labor over the screenplay took much longer than the initial writing of the novel. Mailer said he didn't write the book with a movie in mind, but decided when it was done that it would make a fine picture.

"No one seemed terribly interested. A couple of years went by, and I decided at some point that probably no one else could do it. I wanted to write it and direct it myself," he said. "If this film turns out very well, then I know I want to direct some more films; but if it doesn't, I'll probably never get another shot. I'll spend the rest of my life writing, which is not exactly a disaster."

*Gregory Katz has written for many major magazines, and is a former Provincetown Advocate reporter. He is currently a reporter for USA Today.*

## FRITZ BULTMAN

(Continued from page 73)

panel dropped out, we were able to include politics, civil liberties, and psychoanalysis. Naturally there was infighting (this time between the Americanophiles and the Internationalists), and Hans Hofmann and I issued a manifesto against "Ostrich Politics in the Arts." Frederick Kiesler refused to appear on an architectural panel with Marcel Breuer and sat out the evening at the Hofmanns', having first sent a secretary to take notes on the forum. But we all ended up speaking, our mutual respect and friendship intact.

I want to mention the women who helped us with this cultural adventure: Esther Gottlieb, Judith Rothschild, Catherine Chapin Biddle, my wife Jeanne, and—particularly—Miz Hofmann. Miz was not only an arch diplomat and cook, but also the single person who bridged the end of *Forum '49* and helped move it, with a better prepared exhibition, to the Art Association in the summer of 1950. She also persuaded Weldon to agree to and to amend the foreword written by Hans, Miz, and myself for this Post-Abstract Painting 1950, France-America show.

That show, unfortunately, lacked a work by Dubuffet, a painter whom Weldon admired as much as any of the Americans he championed. He liked the black humor of Dubuffet's early painting, and his formal clarity. But the show did include all the so-called "Ir-rasibles" whose manifesto against the Metropolitan Museum had been signed in the spring of that year, and it also contained sculpture.

After our move, the forum part of our 1949 endeavor became institutionalized into the summer season of the Art Association, until such forums finally petered out in the 1960's. However, there is an interesting sidelight to its survival: A decade ago I was discussing a project with Hudson Walker who said, "The Fine Arts Work Center (in Provincetown) should be like that Forum you and Weldon started in 1949," and with that he went to a bookshelf and returned with a copy of Weldon's *Collected Poems* to illustrate his point.

But while Weldon participated in one of the forums at the Art Association with Gottlieb, Hofmann, and myself, in the summer of 1950, they were not under his direction and lacked the verve of *Forum '49*, the panache and range of humor.

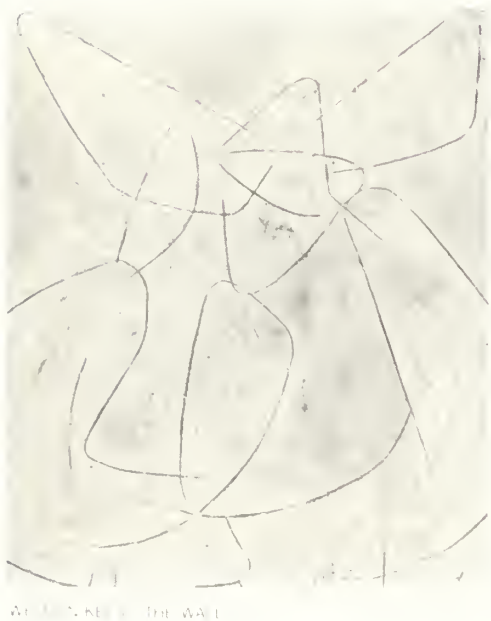
One reason that Weldon liked painting is that he felt it to be open and less controlled by editors/reviewers. At that moment at the end of the 1940's, he felt that the visual arts were still controlled by the artists, that the artists were in control of their own fates. This was a rare and transient moment, not to endure.

We had so many jokes and laughs, those faraway summers, that some of them are still silly—e.g., Dwight McDonald had climbed to the end of so many political limbs that we figured his last refuge would be "Christian Atheism." As the night of his talk on Russian Bureaucracy for *Forum '49* was in the beginning of the Cold War, and many Communist Party followers still summered in Pro-

vincetown, when a particularly serious group entered, Weldon said, "Let's hope we have a few Christian Atheists here tonight." It was, verbally, a rough evening."

Weldon believed in a conspiracy of the mediocre and in the absolute of Dark and Light. He called himself a Manichean, seeing the world in terms of absolutes, good and evil, black and white. He did not particularly see any chance of redemption or basic change. He also believed very strongly that the "burden" of art is carried by an elite, an idea that distressed a member of our sponsoring group. And with characteristic wit he said, "Well, if Mr. R. feels himself a member of the Kultur lumpenproletariat that is a problem for his analyst, not for me." That wit masked a deep pessimism that his late poetry reveals, but at this point his painting, sculptural and clear, was seen in terms of contrasting light and dark, a shape against a contrasting neutral field. In the spring of 1950, he participated in the *Black or White* show at the Kootz Gallery. Robert Motherwell wrote the forward for that show, and it defines as well as anything Weldon's place in the art world of 1950. The other artists were Hofmann, Baziotes, Tobey, Braque, Dubuffet, Miro, Bultman, Tomlin, Mondrian, and Picasso.

I do not know why, but the cultural history of this country seems to divide itself into convenient decades. I do know that 1950 marked radical changes and adjustments in the lives and in the art of Weldon and myself. In the fall of 1950, after a full summer of work and fun, the Keeses left for the West Coast. I had been granted an Italian Government scholarship and went at the same time to Rome, then to Florence, to cast my first sculpture. We kept in touch, but from then on our relationship was via the U.S. mails. Only one of these letters has turned up so far. I did not save letters in those unsettled days, but stuck them into books, or passed them on



to other friends of Weldon in Provincetown. Finally, in the spring of 1952, I went to New York where I saw Weldon's show of collages at Lou Pollock's Peridot Gallery, which by then he had moved to Madison Ave.

In that single letter that I have found, there are pertinent paragraphs on many of the questions that troubled us and amused us both. About collage, Weldon wrote me: "After a long stretch on the collage pile, I now have 18 of them with Lou for a show in March—opens March 24th, I think I remembered correctly. I am glad about this work, and the protracted application opened up a lot of new vistas and taught me something. Collage, since Schwitters, has turned into an occasional occupation, when it actually needs to be given the same severe and drawn-out devotion one would give to oils, a novel, a long poem, or a symphonic work. I mean: it isn't like doing watercolors. Well, anyhow, I hope you have a chance to see the show and give me yr. frank reactions." My reaction to the show was very positive—there had been a change in Weldon's work. Less sculptural and more brilliant in color, the work was more related to the pictorial surface, i.e., horizontal-vertical use of space. It pointed to an integration in his visual metaphor to jazz and popular images than had his earlier, more menaced, sculptural forms, and the use of pieces of posters, among other things, gave it a sense of spontaneity that his earlier work had neglected. Also of interest is that at this moment, Anne Ryan was picking up that work of Schwitters, and she was equally conscious of the validity of collage as "the medium of the 20th century," its most expressive and pure and "painterly" invention. But whereas Anne Ryan kept to the format and scale of Schwitters, Weldon, also using some "found" pieces, enlarged the format and heightened the intensity of color. My memory of that show tells me that it was mainly its brilliant color that dominated and

gave it a real upward and expansive feeling.

There is a coda in the letter concerning this positive exhibition of Weldon's collages. He was experiencing the problems of a change of place. This is a big problem for the artists who work out of their personal and immediate environment. He writes, "With the collages out of the way, I am writing poems again, the first I've been able to finish since coming here. You're right about the blood change in a new spot: it takes a long time—and this one, for me, was the longest ever."

This seems to mean that from the time of his departure to the West Coast, in late 1950, until early 1952, Weldon's activities were centered in the visual arts and in music. His diversions were numerous; there were new friends and new activities. He viewed his departure from New York as fleeing a stricken city—a city that he characterizes as "a dark and dreadful place." He says, "By the winter of 1949-50 I would have settled for Atchison or Lone Pine, Ark., it had gotten that unappetizing." Weldon wanted the New World, the New Day that the mid and late 20th century cannot offer us. Totally American in his orientation, he could find no antidote, in his interior history or nature, to America the hustler, the wheeler-dealer. Yet his work needed these tensions and commitments. This duality between his own dedication and his disgust for a world "gone rotten" was both his goad and the seed of his end.

What this was, we will never know, but I remember a morning in the summer of 1955 at the H.C.E. Gallery when word came to Provincetown (was it via Adolph Gottlieb?) of the car on the bridge. I remember feeling a sinking sensation then as I did on another summer morning in 1948, when Weldon and I were in the garden of the Hofmann house in Provincetown and someone told us of Gorky's suicide. And I thought then, as I think now—another hole in the world.

I had missed Weldon's astringent personality since his departure in 1950 and often spoke of him to the Hofmanns, who were twice exiled and had left friends and surroundings behind. They were totally worldly, in the real sense of the word; and as Miz would say, "This is the way the world is."

*Fritz Bultman, a painter and sculptor, was a founding member of Long Point Gallery.*

*Editor's Note: During the summer of 1979, Fritz Bultman and B.H. Friedman, among others, were invited to participate in a symposium on Weldon Kees, scheduled for the end of that year at the University of Nebraska (Kees's university, class of 1935, in his home state). The project was abandoned because of inadequate funding. These essays are, in a sense, rough drafts, because neither author had yet been told what would be hanging in the university's Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, and because, since 1979, additional letters, stories, etc., of Kees's have been published. Nevertheless, these essays are valuable as they stand. Provincetown Arts intends to publish the Friedman essay next summer.*



WELDON KEES: UNTITLED

## JAMES REIDEL

(Continued from page 71)

Word: "One is continually astounded that art persists at all in the face of so much indifference, failure, and isolation. Van Gogh could write, 'Now it is getting grimmer, colder, emptier, and duller around me,' while still insisting that 'surely there will come a change for the better.' Today we are not likely to insist too strongly on the chances of so interesting a modulation. And in these times, if we were dealing with Van Gogh, as a contemporary, we should handle things differently: he would be 'recognized,' would show annually on Fifty-Seventh Street, be stroked, complimented, sell a few canvases, go to cocktail parties, and be tamed. Not tamed too much, however. He might even find it possible to write that 'it is getting grimmer, colder, emptier, and duller . . . and things go along, worsening only a little.'"

That Kees saw, so many years ago, the trivialization of an ideal and yet still continued to paint is an accomplishment, an elaboration of the figure of the poet before a work of art.

*James Reidel is a poet with recent work in Ironwood and Paris Review. He writes on art for Dialogue: An Art Journal. He is the editor of Weldon Kees: Reviews and Essays, 1936-1955 (University of Michigan Press, forthcoming, late 1987). His Kees essay originally appeared in Dialogue.*

## CHARLES GIULIANO

(Continued from page 46)

ple of years, the work has focused on small symbolist panels, using nature as as reference for personal and philosophical questions. The images are poetic and introspective. Their manner of abstracting from observation recalls the tradition of early American modernists.

I have been thinking about the sublime for many years," commented Robert Ferrandini during the Newton opening. For the show, he submitted a work on paper, "The Red Sea," which had an ominous feeling, with an ocean seemingly on fire beneath a bituminous sky. The work was unusual in the artist's oeuvre, in that it was devoid of picturesque detail. Generally, in his work there are details such as skyscrapers on fire or twisted by tornadoes. Often the images are anecdotal in a way that draws comparisons to Turner and Cole. But the approach, palette, and technique are thoroughly post modern.

The work of Scott Prior often seems to draw attention for the wrong reason. He is a consummate technician who mastered oil painting technique and is able to create loving detail and a luminous feeling for light and color. But beneath these painterly skills lies a somewhat ironic and acerbic intelligence that gives to his paintings their peculiar and unnerving edge. While his view of a beach ball in the back yard

is beautifully painted, bright, strongly composed, and colorful, it also has the uneasy irony of the unseen presence of the child (not depicted) who would play with the ball. The view of nature has a hidden agenda about family and small children. I wish Scott Prior would go on TV and teach us how to paint like that in five easy steps.

The centerpiece of the Newton show was a Paul Oberst installation that filled the proscenium stage of the Art Center and dramatically changed the space of the room and the feeling of that exhibition. One sensed that nature had been recreated illusionistically in the gallery.

Oberst is a native of Kentucky, and the installation was inspired by an experience with nature in his home state. It recreates an Osage tree that is found in a brambled forest. The tree bears large fruits that are seductive but poisonous. For the piece, he started with a painted series of panels forming a panoramic views of the Osage forest. In front of this, after many hours of work, he created an actual bramble of branches. To this he added a sound track of nature. Because of the scale of the piece, and its feeling of depth, it was possible to lose a sense of one's surroundings and responses. The work succeeded in totally seducing and overwhelming the viewer with the artist's unique perception of his experience of nature. How sublime!

It is gratifying to curate a show in which one feels that everyone involved with the project has somehow learned from the experience. But what was fun about doing this show was that it made everyone think about the theories of landscape and how they apply to contemporary art. Too often, artists such as those in this show feel amputated from the larger dialogue of contemporary art. But what counts, it seems to me, is a freshness of approach and the force of one's intellect and artistic ability. And it is refreshing to deal with young artists who are willing to grapple with ancient problems that demand contemporary responses and solutions.

## SUSAN MITCHELL

(Continued from page 65)

a flying carpet with three dark threads tentacled down. As we banked, cloud after cloud tumbled toward us, breakers, whitecapped, foaming, spewing spray—and then it was the ocean, all its teeth bared.

Sometimes the ocean returns to me in surprising ways—as this past Christmas in the powder room of a N.Y.C. department store. It was my favorite hour. Outside, the lights had just come on, snow was beginning to fall, each flake a momentary jewel in the hair of passersby. As I yawned into the mirror, a stall door opened behind me: the woman enthron-

ed on the toilet puckered her glossy red lips, sweeping her hands up her skinny black hair caught in a chinon. Still sitting, she wiggled out of black lace pantihose and into crotchless panties. The woman who had just left her stall resembled the woman I had chatted with the night before at a dinner party: same blond bangs, same thick hair squared at the jaw, same sad eyes and drained face. Now I watched them both in the mirror. The prostitute was radiant, glowing, as she removed the crotchless panties, lowering them slowly to the floor, a gesture that suddenly seemed the essence of her appeal. Nothing can dirty me, that gesture said. Not the dirt on the floor. Not the water oozing out of the toilets. Not the urine spotting the toilet seats. Not the faded blonde whose sadness leaves a sour taste only in her own mouth. The prostitute waved a leg in my direction and smiled: "Boy, oh boy, oh boy," she said, her voice entirely different from what I had expected; it seemed to come from another body, from a delivery boy's or a cab driver's. Still looking in the mirror, I smiled back, thinking of the ocean licking itself clean all those nights in Provincetown as I listened in the dark. The ocean that heals instantly around whatever penetrates it. The ocean lubed to a shine. In a mirror, the ocean looks at itself and sees that it is wearing a rose. And sees that it has no hats. This ocean that goes on talking in my sleep, that keeps kneading itself like dough, like prayer.

*Susan Mitchell is the author of The Water Inside the Water (Wesleyan). She is poetry editor of Provincetown Arts.*

## ANNE BERNAYS

*(Continued from page 54)*

want my wife to die in your house?"

"You see?" Paula said, after the rescue people had removed Helen and Phillip Finley by ambulance.

"Splendid fellow," Jonas said to Frank. "You're one helluva trooper."

"It was weird," Frank said. "I don't think I want to do that again right away."

"You see what you've done?" Paula said, enraged.

"What are you talking about?" Jonas said. "I'm not responsible for her collapse. By the way, what do you think it was?"

Frank stood by the window, rubbing his wrists where the skin was bright pink. Lindsey said, "You didn't have to tie him so tight, Jonas. I mean for Chrissake, he wasn't going to try to escape or anything."

"She's right, Jonas," Paula said. "I hate this."

"I'm sorry Frank's hurt," Jonas said. "But none of you objected before Mrs. What's-her-name pulled her faint."

"You can't mean you think she was faking?" Paula said.

Jonas seemed to be doing a reading of the emotions in the room. "I don't think she was faking, no. I do think she was upset. She couldn't bring herself to say, 'What is that man doing tied in a chair?' She'll be okay. I know her type. She was raised on griddle cakes, fresh fruit, and porterhouse steak; and she's got great genes. She'll survive."

"How can you be so fucking sure?"

Above them, clouds moved this way and that as the wind shifted. The sun came out for thirty seconds.

"Hey," Frank said, "I've got an idea. You like experiments, Jonas."

"Sure I do," Jonas said. "I could use a bloody mary. Who wants to join me?"

"No, I'm serious, Jonas. Wouldn't you like to see how it feels, being tied up the way I was?"

"I think I can figure it out," Jonas said. He opened a cabinet and removed a thirty-two-ounce can of tomato juice. "Where's the effing can opener?"

"Jonas honey," Lindsey said, in a fake drawl, "I think you're scared."

"Who, me?" he said. Paula opened a drawer and fished out the church key, which she handed to Jonas.

Frank persisted. "No, really, pal. I think you ought to have the experience. We won't truss you up so tight it hurts. Honestly, it was funny there for a moment. I thought I was a prisoner. My head did something weird. . . ."

"Don't bug him," Lindsey said. "He doesn't want to. He's afraid."

"Not afraid," Jonas said, putting the can opener down so hard it bounced. Paula was silent. "In fact, I think I'm going to enjoy this. Do your stuff." He sat, grinning, in the chair they had used for Frank. Above the grin, Paula caught the look of raw appeal he sent her; still, she said nothing.

Together, Frank and Lindsey wound rope around Jonas's middle. Frank said, "Now your hands. That's it, make sure the chair's not digging into your upper arms. Not too tight?"

"It's okay," Jonas said.

"Now for your feet. God, your socks are thick."

"One hundred per cent wool," Jonas said. "Paula bought them at Eddie Bauer. They're hunting socks—whatever that is." His voice was choked. Lindsey asked Paula for a clean handkerchief. I should stop this, Paula told herself as she fetched it from her bureau.

"Open wide," Lindsey said.

"What if I . . . ?" Jonas began. Lindsey stuffed his mouth, cutting off the question. "Everything all right? You can breathe okay?" Jonas nodded. Trickle of sweat ran down in front of his ears.

"Paula, my dear, would you care to join Lindsey and me in a walk down this magnificent stretch of beach. Looks like we have a spot of sun," Frank said. Paula could tell he was uncomfortable. "Good idea," she said. "I'll get my jacket." She refused to look at Jonas.

As they left the house, Lindsey turned and waved: "Bye, Jonas honey. We'll bring you back a shell."

It was colder than it looked. A chill wind hit their legs and made a rush of noise in their ears. Paula stuck her hands in her pockets. "I don't feel right about this," she said. "What if he has to go to the bathroom?"

"I guess he'll just have to wet his pants."

"Lindsey, honestly. . . ."

"I know it's none of my business," Lindsey said, "but Jonas really did ask for it. I mean a joke's a joke, but that poor woman. . . ."

"It wasn't his fault, really," Paula said.

"You don't think so?" Frank said.

Paula knew they were right. Self-pity warmed her chest; she felt its heat as pain. It wasn't a new sensation, but one she hadn't allowed herself to feel since the children were very small. "It's not something I can talk about right now."

"Poor thing," Lindsey said.

They walked for another fifty yards or so. On their right, the bay was grayish, agitated.

"I'm going back," Paula announced. "I can't stand this. This isn't the way I want to do it."

"Would you like me to come with you?" Lindsey said.

"I don't think so," Paula said. She turned

and began to walk back, slowly at first, but when she reached their path, she found she was running. An enormous black-bottomed cloud swung between earth and sun. Paula dashed up the path, opened the front door, and stopped short. Jonas was still tied to the chair, but his bones had melted. He had freed his legs. There was a dark patch over his crotch and a puddle under the chair. Two buttons were torn from his shirt; one of them lay in the puddle. His hair was slick with perspiration and his mouth, still gagged, had leaked. His eyes said HELP!

Paula pulled out the gag and untied the rope. "I'm so sorry. It was a mean and stupid thing to do." She tensed, expecting fireworks, the yelling of an angry man. But instead she saw a stranger begin to whimper, then grab her around the waist, pushing his head against her stomach, choking on his own tears.

"Jonas," she cried.

He opened his mouth as if to explain, but he couldn't, no more than an infant can tell his mother how terrified he is.

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*Ann Bernays is the author of several novels, including Growing Up Rich and The Address Book.*

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## APRIL KINGSLEY

(Continued from page 77)

ing time. Instead of an instant immersion in a new experience, it is gradual over time. I want to implicate human history.

**AK:** Turrell wants to sidestep it. But most art people who see your sculptures probably relate them to Brancusi's wooden pieces and wouldn't even think of Turrell having any relationship to your work.

**BH:** Brancusi made votive objects. I don't. The viewer is irrelevant in Brancusi's world of things—even unwelcome. All of my *Altars* demand a viewer, a participator. They are pointed directly at the viewer. When you wander into that roomful of Brancusi sculptures at MOMA, you feel like an intruder, a stumblebum amongst the angels. I want my *Altars* to directly face and challenge and unnerve the viewer. I want that, not cool indifference or moral superiority. In real life, nobody's as pure as a Brancusi. The physical impurity of my wooden surfaces relates to the viewer's own physicality and morality.

**AK:** I've observed a definite purism about the way you go about constructing your sculptures however.

**BH:** It's important to me that the construction is understated. I want all the relationships to seem not to be the result of mere decorative, manmade decisions. I love the line of Flaubert's where he said that "an artist should be in his work like God in nature: present everywhere, but visible nowhere."

**AK:** So the decisions and methods must be hidden.

**BH:** Yes—and there's also the level on which I want to let the material be. If it looks too contrived or messed with, you see the artist's fingerprints all over it. If I have a piece of wood eight feet long, I try to use it whole, all eight feet of it, and if I have to cut it, I try to conceal that cut. So I remove the fingerprints that way.

**AK:** I see a connection between the way you about the units in a piece, or have them just about touch, or pass by one another, and the Constructivist strategies of Rietveld and Mondrian.

**BH:** I feel very close to Mondrian because of his attempt to combine the static and dynamic in the same object. Ideally, I would like to take five pieces of wood and make something that has the fixed, hieratic quality of an altar, but that also has a dynamic, modern, even suspended anti-architectural quality. In architecture you want to create the illusion of stability so you overbuild to give that illusion. It is emotionally reassuring to the viewer...

**AK:** Except for Baroque architecture, of course.

**BH:** Deliberately creating gaps where things don't meet—or cantilevers, is my way of being non-architectural in the forms and creating the illusion of dynamism.

**AK:** I see a definite relationship between your sculptures and Abstract Expressionist painting, particularly that of Franz Kline.

**BH:** I agree. After all I was, once upon a time, an Abstract Expressionist painter. My forms aren't closed in the ancient, traditional, manner of making sculpture. Brancusi's "Birds in Space," like any stone sculpture has a holistic sense to it. Only the relation of the stone to the various parts of the base is collage-like. I'd rather have the sculpture be like a Mondrian painting—made up of distinctly legible parts that create an active whole.

**AK:** Being involved with the Sculpture Center, and with women's sculpture in particular, I've become aware of how much of today's sculpture aspires to material anonymity. Mixed media is the designated medium ninety-nine percent of the time, so that a sculptor working exclusively in one material, the way Livio Saganic does in slate, and you do in wood, is a rare exception. And the mixture of media in most sculpture is usually so homogenized one cannot figure out from the look of the piece what its major physical components are. You are clearly working in a very different manner.

**BH:** No one else seems to be using imperfect, weathered materials within a Constructivist, Modernist vocabulary and idiom.

**AK:** Di Suvero briefly used rough materials in a Baroque manner, but now, when he works in a Constructivist idiom, he uses the material of modern construction, namely steel.

**BH:** The standard thing is to use clean Modernist materials with a clean, Constructivist vocabulary. It goes so well with the decor in a cold, corporate setting.

**AK:** Someday we may feel a sense of nostalgia for the pre-rust belt economy to which such artwork refers. I prefer Greece as a subject for nostalgic longing.

**BH:** Yes, but not necessarily the Greece of picture postcards. When we went to the Acropolis, I was most excited by the Propylea, the gateway. The Parthenon, marvelous though it is, is too much like an icon, a destination. But the Propylea implies ongoing passage rather than arrival. You're different on either side of it. It's not an immediate, confrontational kind of experience, but rather one that takes place over time.

**AK:** I know you've been talking about making some gateway kinds of sculptures.

**BH:** Yes. I've played around with the image before, and I want to come back to it. I also want to make some little sacred landscapes, table-top pieces.

**AK:** Like the plaster pieces on tables you made in the early sixties?

**BH:** Not exactly. They were so primitive.

**AK:** Were those old plaster pieces influenced by Noguchi's playground models?

**BH:** They were sources of the idea. Some were done literally as tables, which still interests me. But now I want to make small sculptures in ceramic that would suggest temple spaces, places for ritual, like the studies I did out of wood for plazas a few years ago.

**AK:** I know you were tremendously affected by the experience of moving through the structured spaces at the Palace of Minos at

Knossos.

**BH:** Greek sites like that imply the presence of people—ancient Greeks—in a way that Gothic cathedrals don't imply the presence of medieval worshippers. Cathedrals are more self-contained. Greek temples on their sites, the Propylea, the organization of the views of the Parthenon from the pathways up the Acropolis all imply the necessity of ancient Greeks—actual people—moving through them to complete the experience. The Peruvian altars in Macchu Picchu also imply the need of human participants for completion. But the Gothic cathedral is so full of icons that it seems somehow too literal, too finished off.

**AK:** People are always looking for literal references to the UFO phenomenon in your work, and you do feel there must be some influence, but are there any recognizable connections?

**BH:** It's a metaphorical thing. My painting and sculpture embraces the *idea* of mystery. What I'm talking about is more the situation of a Rothko, where mystery is stated and information is withheld. It's not a religious thing. Religion involves dogma, a structured belief system, which I find antithetical to my nature. Though the UFO phenomenon is undoubtedly connected with certain preoccupations in my work, my roles in the two areas are contradictory. In art I'm content to embrace mystery per se and to deal with it as self-sufficient emotional content. I take wood and canvas and pigment and try to create mystery. But in my UFO investigations I take a mysterious given and try to analyze it, rationalize it, and make it understandable—to demystify it so to speak. The mystical side of my nature comes out in my art; the rational, scientific side comes out in my UFO research. There I become an earthbound detective, a flatfoot. I only fly in my art.

Paul Gauguin's famous painting, "Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?," asks a question. Religious art provides answers. The fact that the question has no answer makes it that much more powerful. It's the question that I'm interested in, not the answer.

*This year, Random House published Intruders, Budd Hopkins's second book to result from his UFO research. Also this year, one of his sculptures, "Altar" (1985), was acquired by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and this summer the artist will have the first primarily sculptural exhibition of his long career. His strange and, yes, mysterious sculptures will be on view at the Long Point Gallery from July 26th through August 8th.*

*April Kingsley is an independent curator and critic. Her most recent book is on the Ash Can School.*

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## PETER MANSO

(Continued from page 25)

don't see that in Norman's work. In other words, in the old days, Norman would indeed take what you would call his interest in psychopathology and put it to work. Show me in the past three books of Norman Mailer where indeed he is wrestling from an anarchistic or leftist or progressive point of view with the problems of power and money. It doesn't exist. Trust me.

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"My greatest conversational pleasures amount to 'working out' with someone who's not only bright but energetic. Such encounters make you better, just like adding weight or increasing the number of reps with barbells."

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Norman is in a bad place. Norman is under contract to Random House for four books over a seven year period. He's into the fourth year of that contract now. He has not delivered a single book. Instead, he is playing movie director. Norman has led his life on the principle of infinite expectation, but when you're sixty-four you can't operate like that any longer. Do you think that we're likely to get impor-

tant books from Mailer in the years to come?

**RE:** When I was asking about role models, I didn't mean just in the broad sense of aspiring as a kid to become a "Norman Mailer"; but in specific ways, weren't there traits of his that you co-opted?

**PM:** Oh, yeah. My close friend Joe Flaherty, who died four years ago, was the campaign manager of the Mailer/Breslin campaign. Joe and I did not speak for months because in his book on the campaign he referred to me as "mini Mailer." Sure, I'll cop to that—we all imitate our heroes in one way or another—it's part of submitting to the consequences of one's mistakes.

**RE:** Do you think there are still elements of those traits in you?

**PM:** It would be arrogant if I said no. On the other hand, I'd like to think I can work against it. Why? Because it takes me in false directions.

**RE:** You're including your well-known proclivity to engage in confrontation?

**PM:** Qualify that, and I'll say no, not including confrontation. My greatest conversational pleasures amount to "working out" with someone who's not only bright but energetic. Such encounters make you better, just like adding weight or increasing the number of reps with barbells. Most conversations are tiresome and predictable. If you, Ray, happen to believe in Jerry Falwell and you're smart, I'd want to know why you believe in Falwell, and, indeed, if you've thought about it. The most fruitful kinds of conversations, the most important conversations, have to do with a back and forth as opposed to polite listening.

**RE:** Just short of butting heads, right?

**PM:** Far short. That's something that I've never understood about Norman, and have never been drawn to try.

**RE:** I don't see any scars on your forehead.

**PM:** Look, my background is totally different from Norman's. I have my own pathologies, granted, but they simply aren't Norman's.

**CB:** Before we get stuck in the sport of butting heads, I would like to ask you some questions about your professional life—let's discuss your development as a literary person.

**PM:** I don't know if I am a literary person.

**RE:** What do you mean by that?

**PM:** A couple of things. My career has been all over the place. I'm not a "novelist," or a "reporter," or even a conventional "nonfiction writer." I've simply tried to make a liv-

"Literary people fancy themselves as more moral, more humanistic, so their arrogance is more reprehensible."

ing through my work and, unfortunately, haven't had the wherewithal to devote myself to "pure" literature, which may have been a blessing in disguise. For a number of years now I've wanted to make day-glo orange bumper stickers bearing the legend "Art Sucks." Why? Because artsy precociousness is a destructive thing. The literary world is replete with greed and politics, and being a "literary person," in the sense in which the phrase is usually used, means participating in that. Who needs it?

**RE:** It's not limited to the literary world.

**PM:** No, it's not, except that literary people fancy themselves as more moral, more humanistic, so their arrogance is more reprehensible. Their argument is that a person doesn't become a writer for the same reason that someone becomes a stockbroker. Presumably, there's some moral salvation in taking a vow of poverty. It may come as a tremendous surprise to most folks, but "literary people" don't share their resources with each other. They compete. You can't avoid the fact that most literary people are backbiting. Do I want to live like that? Not really, and the problem is compounded by the romantic notion held by independently wealthy dabblers that artists are indeed at their beck and call; also by the enormously damaging notion that painters and writers are above money, which in turn confuses the issue only further. I don't want to sound like I'm crying in my beer, but in our culture artists and writers are so, on the one hand, treated like shit and, on the other, ennobled that it's surreal. Johnny Carson once asked Truman Capote why he drank so much, and Capote's reply is very much to the point here: "I drink like many writers because you don't understand how lonely and difficult it is to sit at a desk." In other words, don't call me an alcoholic, you idiot, this is hard, hard work I do, and while I'm doing it I can't help myself because I'm aware of your trivial expectations.

**CB:** It's true. Artists are just furious at being under the thumb of nitwits.

**RE:** Although you have definitely distanced yourself from the impoverished artist category by recently signing a lucrative contract to write a biography of Marlon Brando, your primary writing vehicle in the past was the magazine interview.

**PM:** Look, who have I interviewed? The Koch *Playboy* interview that lost him the gubernatorial election, Jesse Jackson, a whole bunch

**"An interview is a confrontation, and if you believe in something you ought to be able to stand up for it."**

of lawyers like F. Lee Bailey. Last summer I did David Stockman—a pleasure, insofar as he walked out on me. I don't know the full list—what difference does it make? Most of these encounters have been fun and also paid the rent. They've also offered me a clue as to what goes on in this country. Is the interview a sub-genre? I don't care. Will it get me a Guggenheim grant? I don't care about that either.

**RE:** It strikes me that central to your interviewing technique is a certain talent you have for focusing on key aspects in someone's makeup and . . .

**PM:** And then offend them . . .

**RE:** And then only see someone's negative features—highlight their weaknesses.

**PM:** That is a happy Episcopalian distinction that will get you nowhere, Ray. An interview is a confrontation, and if you believe in something you ought to be able to stand up for it.

**RE:** But what about the whole picture? A person has both pluses and minuses.

**PM:** Again, a bromide. Let's get specific and focus on my work. Probably my best-known interview was with Mayor Ed Koch, which caused such a stir that it might have cost him the gubernatorial election—I mean front page *New York Times*, evening network TV news, Dan Rather . . . the whole bit.

**RE:** That was circumstantial.

**PM:** Sure it was, just like William Greider's *Atlantic* interview got David Stockman out to the wood shed. The point I'm making is that I didn't savage Koch; I asked pertinent questions. Was I lucky? Sure, but so what? You make your own luck, or at least encourage it through a lot of preparation and perseverance. Koch continues to this day to talk to me. Periodically, we'll have dinner in one of his beloved N.Y.C. restaurants. If he doesn't feel I was out to savage him, why should you? The fact that he talked about what emerges as his bigotries toward people who live *outside* of New York City wasn't a lopsided move on my part. What emerged was classic Koch, and certainly a Koch who hadn't been bushwacked.

Look at the Mailer book. Is it consistently hard on Mailer's insanities or selfishness? Hardly. If anything it leans too much in Mailer's favor. Besides, there's no point in doing an interview if you're just going to try and vilify someone. Who'll read it?

**RE:** Perhaps you're more fair in your professional life than in your personal life.

**CB:** I think that you admire energy, in fact put a higher value on energy than on morality.

**PM:** In the best sense energy *is* morality. I've spent the past year working on a piece about the farm crisis, and the connection between energy and morality has never been more apparent to me than in farmers—people who are no longer going to pretend that the federal government and the "system" have their interests at heart. Some of the farmers are fighting back, and in the process they're undergoing the most profound psychic revolution I've ever seen. Their determination to change generations-old patterns makes Berkeley in the sixties look like a bunch of spoiled kids playing at revolution. These folks have been betrayed by their heritage, have acknowledged this, and still insist, "We're not going to die." They've learned to get lawyers, learned how to deal with the bank on the bank's own terms, and, even more, for the first time since the Depression, they're ready to dump the Republicans. Even though they're in a lot of pain, the best ones haven't turned on neighbors, and, indeed, they've managed to grow. *That's* morality and energy both, and when you see it at work out in a place like Iowa, it just wows you, believe me.

**RE:** Let's talk about Manso in Provincetown. When did you catch your first glimpse of the Pilgrim Monument?

**PM:** That was back in '48 or '49. It was a rather different place then.

**RE:** Did you take to the town right away?

**PM:** Loved it. I loved the freedom of swimming and all the rest of it, but the two summers I remember most fondly are the summer I spent building a boat with Chet Pfiefer showing me the way, and the summer I built a hot rod under the tutelage of Eddie Noons, who used to be shop manager at the old Ford garage. Those guys were great, and I loved Provincetown for them.

**RE:** Did you have a Jimmy Dean mentality up here? Did you see yourself as different, as doing things that you associated with teenage alienation?

**PM:** "Teenage alienation?" Who knew the term?

**CB:** You were obsessed with your hot rod as a project, not as a vehicle of social identity.

**PM:** That's right. Believe it or not, I built the engine in my bedroom in New York, in a faculty building right around the corner from Columbia University. What I loved about Provincetown was the physical stuff, and I

don't mean sports so much as making things with my hands. To this day I have favorites in town like Bobby Meads, the plumber. I love Bobby, his wryness and readiness to engage. I also take some small pride in thinking that a number of these guys around town, electricians, carpenters, what have you, have some respect for me too. As a kid, did I identify with the kids of people who would come up for two weeks and stay at the Seascope House or the Colonial Inn? No, I did not.

**RE:** You've always projected an image of yourself as a poor kid surrounded by rich people who had advantages that you resented. But I never understood why you didn't perceive yourself as having the advantages of having culturally enlightened parents.

**PM:** Meaning that I have projected myself as having a chip on my shoulder. I think that's a gross simplification. The image is without layers, two-dimensional. Substitute bourgeois or Yuppie for rich and we have some basis for discussion.

**RE:** But you never talk about the advantages you had being born into a family of culturally sensitive people. Your father is a highly self-educated man with a very refined sensibility.

**PM:** You're assuming that to grow up in a place like P-town as the son of a serious painter is inevitably a boon. Well, it's not. Aside from the fact that artists are pulled between the privacy of their work and what's commonly called family responsibilities—I spent a good part of my youth in the hot-house culture of Provincetown. Hereabouts, a lot of people implicitly regard themselves as more holy than their counterparts in Scarsdale, say.

CB: Because they view art as a calling.

PM: That's right. The analogy, at the risk of tremendous overstatement, is: is it easy to be the son of a priest? Artists, by virtue of their economic circumstances, are under enormous pressures that can not only leave their kids high and dry, but, indeed, can detract from a kid's simple pleasures. The world the kid's operating in, remember, is made up of self-justifying egomaniacs. It's a competitive situation glossed with "high calling."

RE: That's your perception after having gone through the experience of being an artist's son, but what about twenty-five years ago?

PM: In certain ways I think I was a cypher to my parents, as well as to their friends.

RE: What do you mean by that?

PM: A mystery. For example, when I was building hot rods, I felt it was regarded as a low activity. Even today my mother cannot understand why I participate in twenty-four hour professional car races.

RE: That's a mystery to all of us.

PM: Fine. It's not a mystery to me. The point is, due to a whole complex of things, no one bothers to ask. Part of the "holiness" of art I've been talking about comes down to a narrowness that shuts out experience.

RE: But, when you were twenty, say, and somebody would ask you, "What does your father do?" didn't you use the word "painter" with pride?

PM: Yes of course. I thought it was something special, absolutely. On the other hand, let it be said that at age twenty, money was a meaningless thing to me and so there was no way I could relate to the question as I might now. I didn't know what "painter" meant to the world at large. The only time I thought about money and its social clout was

during the summer when I worked seven days a week washing dishes and cleaning out the bathrooms at the Flagship.

RE: And the johns haven't been as clean since.

PM: So be it.

RE: Did your father talk to you about art? Did Leo want you to follow in his footsteps?

PM: No, he never put that kind of pressure on me. One of the great inheritances, for better or worse, has to do with this notion of purity that was delivered subliminally. Success was a posited goal, but never posited openly, and rarely was it keyed to the arts. What Leo did do, and I remember this with great fondness, was he'd draw for me when I'd be going to bed in the evening—line drawings of tools, cars, boats, and other things I was interested in. Still, later on I always felt like a heathen building my hot rods in this community.

CB: Was that a form of rebellion?

PM: No. It was something I enjoyed. I love race cars.

CB: Yeah, but a heathen breaks with the orthodox.

PM: Maybe. But you're trying to superimpose

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"Let's say you're right, that Manso is abrasive. Fine. Only make a distinction as to my targets, please, because there's no way I'm going to sanction some of the phonies in this town."

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a kind of self-consciousness on all this that just wasn't operational. I mean, what's so hard to understand about Peter Manso being a writer and also driving race cars? We're talking about a sophisticated segment of our society, whether they are artists, writers, whatever. And yet, over and over again, I get this feedback that I am odd man out. These people cannot understand my passion for driving race cars. What's the mind set that makes the two incompatible? Is it that racing cars are too low class? That the putative dangers contradict art as "meditative" or "soul searching"? Well, to hell with that! Overcoming fear can be as lyrical as anything, and what you can learn about yourself through competition and fear is enormous.

RE: Peter, you're missing an incredible distinction. It's not your love of racing cars that makes you "odd man out." You have a reputation in this community as being someone who is uncompromising in his relationships.

PM: Why is it that I can talk to A.J. Foyt, four-time winner of the Indianapolis 500, never having met him before, and say, "I'm Peter

Manso. We've talked on the phone. I understand that you punch out reporters. I'm here to do this article, and I don't want trouble." Foyt will look at me with that big grin of his, this huge hulking bear of a Texan, and say, "Well, Pete, you don't give me no trouble, and I don't give you no trouble." Why am I able to do that? Here I can't have that kind of exchange except with locals, people like Bobby Meads.

RE: In that world you're an exotic. In this world . . .

PM: In that world, I ain't shit. I'm just a Jew boy.

RE: Oh, come on. You have a reputation in racing circles of being a major writer, the guy who wrote Jackie Stewart's biography. I saw how you were treated at the U.S. Grand Prix at Watkins Glen. The drivers approached you with respect, as though you held the secret to Jackie Stewart's success.

PM: All right, but why are the same energies that make the Foyt and Stewart experiences possible, the same energies that make me odd man out in Provincetown?

RE: It's because you won't compromise with people, and you choose to be uncivil.

PM: Oh, come on! I am not uncivil.

RE: You are, and there are many people who are not willing to deal with that.

PM: Let's say you're right, that Manso is abrasive. Fine. Only make a distinction as to my targets, please, because there's no way I'm going to sanction some of the phonies in this town. We've all witnessed rich guys dressed in worn out dungarees trying to pass as artists, throwing their weight around at the Art Association, getting painters to kiss their asses in the hope they'll buy a painting.

A curious thing about Provincetown is that

it is a resort town, which is to say that people can go to their lesser half. They're more trivial, they're more shallow, they're less conscientious.

**CB:** They're also more experimental.

**PM:** Nonsense. Aside from the sun and sea, people come up here to flex muscle. One of the ways that the phonies flex muscle is that they get very hip about the community, they ingratiate themselves by pretending to know what's happening, and knowing what's happening they enforce certain stereotypes. What disappoints me about Provincetown is the social matrix. It's a caste system, not a meritocracy. Neither aesthetic nor political values hold sway so much as who gets invited to whose cocktail party.

**CB:** You come at this with a lot of anger.

**RE:** And in your anger, consistently over the years, you have alienated people by insulting them.

**PM:** There is absolutely no question that Peter Manso, over the years, has had a big mouth. No question. A partial explanation, however, has to do with the hypocrisy and Yuppiedom that seems to have become P-town. Wellfleet and Truro may be filled with WASP academics, lawyers, and psychoanalysts, but at least they know where Nicaragua is. As Provincetown has become more bourgeois, people have become more afraid of confrontations, and what they interpret as an insult from me is not always what it seems. In the old days, this place thrived on fights. It was at one with the work people did. The energy level was unique. Now it's as flat as a cold soufflé.

Part of my anger comes from growing up in this town as the son of a serious painter. What I've seen, and saw most painfully as a

boy, was a certain kind of power at work and an undignified response to that power. Do you understand that there were heavy hitter collectors in Provincetown when I was growing up? They would determine whether an artist's family could survive the whole summer. You'd come up for a month, rent a house, have maybe a \$300 grub stake, and the issue was could you sell enough paintings to get through the summer. More often than not, gallery openings amounted to an ass-kissing game. Could you get someone rolling in money to buy a painting for \$75? People turned themselves inside out, artists pursuing collectors, wooing potential buyers, on top of which you had artists knifing other artists, all of them scrambling for a sale.

It was insane, and as a teenager I remember most vividly one collector who comported himself in the most coercive, boorish, martinettish way, the message consistently being: I have money, I may or may not buy your painting, kiss my ass. The irony is that at the same time my parents, trying to preserve their egos and their sense of dignity, are telling me that art is holy and we are special people. Well, if the cost of specialness, this particular

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**"One of the great things about homosexuals in Provincetown is that many of them have traditionally seen the place as a refuge, a bohemian other, just like the artists and the Portuguese."**

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specialness, is kissing the ass of that kind of people, then the price is too fucking high.

The analogy is growing up Black and hearing one's father called "boy." That it takes place in Provincetown, which has become a real-estate mecca, makes it intolerable.

**CB:** Over the years, I have heard you make contradictory statements regarding homosexuals in Provincetown. Could you clarify your feelings?

**PM:** Do you think that because I said, "Call me Norman Mailer's cocksucker" that I'm suddenly an expert on P-town homosexuality?

**RE:** You haven't encouraged many friendships with homosexuals in Provincetown. Isn't that true?

**PM:** Do you think I've drawn arbitrary lines here? Really, Ray, I know you've become the Cape's most intrepid interviewer, but you're taking us down the wrong road. Have I sought out Black friends? Red friends? Orientals or Jews? One doesn't choose one's friends; one accepts them.

My problem with the homosexualization of Provincetown has nothing to do with cocks and asses; it's not the anatomical coupling that

bothers me. What disturbs me is gay day-tripper arrogance, which we've all seen grow by leaps and bounds. One of the great things about homosexuals in P-town is that many of them have traditionally seen the place as a refuge, a bohemian other, just like the artists and the Portuguese. Yet lately there's been a shift, a new gay culture here that is not so removed from the dentist and the insurance agents with their damn condominiums.

**CB:** The bourgeois?

**PM:** Yes, the bourgeois alternative, represented by both. The faggots—and I'm making a distinction between faggots and homosexuals or gays—coming up for two weeks in August, plopping down \$100 a night for a bed at the Boatslip, are not to be confused with year-round gays who are committed to the community, who indeed love this place and have put their asses on the line because the place is home. All of us can name any number of gays who've been involved with wintertime theater, with holding the line on real-estate development, with matters of concern to the community.

**CB:** What's the difference between that and the straight tourists?

**PM:** None. Except for a minority group arrogance which has only fed Portuguese hostility. There's also another difference, and this is as good a place to address it as any: Provincetown stands to become the country's petrie dish for the spread of AIDS, and here I think the town has conducted itself shamefully. The Selectmen should publicize the problem or allocate funds for treatment facilities or even a hospice, as San Francisco has done. But nobody has the conscience or balls to jeopardize the tourist trade. "Keep it a secret," that's been the response and indeed, certain

elements of the gay community are as much to blame as the motel owners and Selectmen.

Go and talk to homosexuals who live here year-round, people in the know. Sample their response to summer time gays who come up here in Ferraris and Mercedes' looking for their tricks. There's an epidemic waiting to happen. What are the Selectmen or Chamber of Commerce doing? And where's *The Advocate* in all of this? Has the town's only newspaper adopted an editorial policy ignoring the fact that members of the community are dying of this disease? It's like the movie *Jaws*, "There's no shark out there," but we all know there is, don't we?

**RE:** If you find so many things about Provincetown reprehensible why do you come back here every year?

**PM:** Because I can walk into the local bank and they'll give me a loan.

**RE:** That's the best reason you can come up with?

**PM:** Look, when I was halfway through the Mailer book I was flat busted, tapped out. Instead of magazine pieces, what got me through was an unsecured loan. Maybe that's the definition of home. People trust you. People know you and life's a lot easier than elsewhere. Just this morning I was driving over to the dentist and bumped into Ronnie White who was supposed to be out here fixing the electricity. I got out of my car, the two of us kibbitz and there's no bullshit. He's not treating me like an outsider, some summer schmuck. I said, "God damn, the system out there is really on the fritz." "You need a board downstairs, you need a board upstairs," he replied and I said, "Damn it Ron, just give me a price and let's get it done." Boom! I also like the fact that Bobby Meads will come over and fix my furnace and then we'll sit down and have a couple of drinks and he'll tell me great stories. I'm a sucker for that shit, a real needy corn ball that way. But I tell you, Ray, last spring I came back here and was just bowled over by the big village which had sprung up around Harry Kemp Way. Then you've got other "developments" all over the place, out by Gale Force Stables, by the Dairy Queen, another monster apartment complex right next door to my parents' place, and all of it is like some hideous rash. Just when is it going to end?

And yet, I still love the place; but loving something, as most of us know, is a guarantee of nothing.

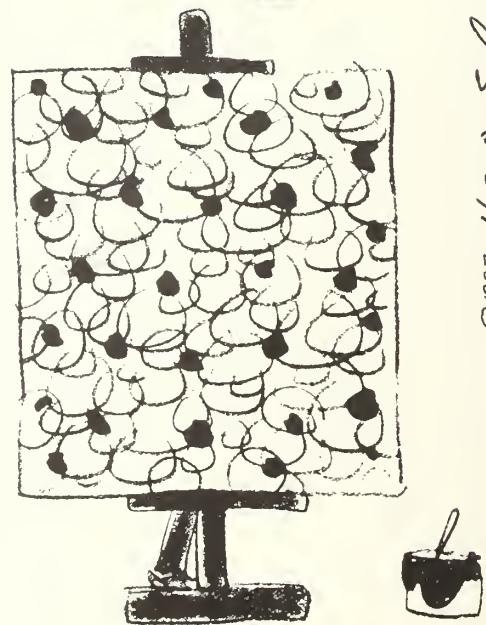
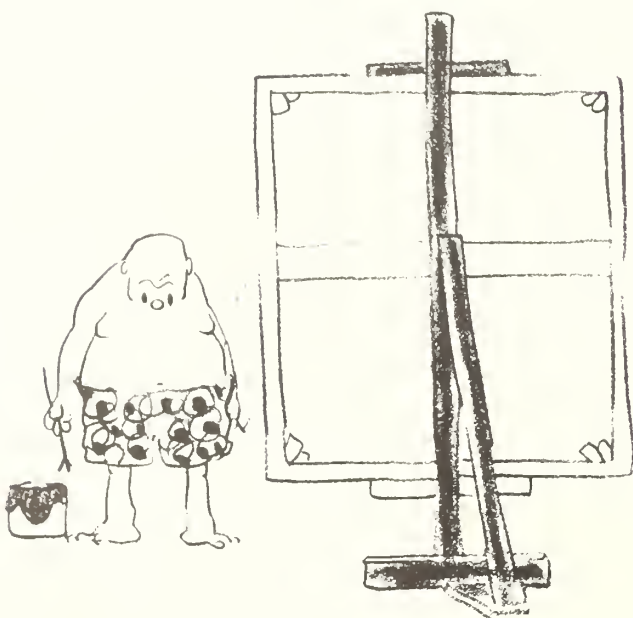
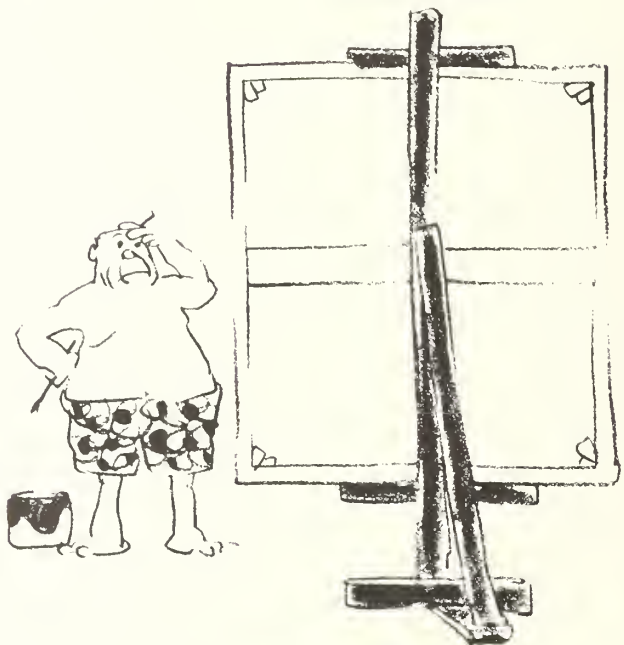
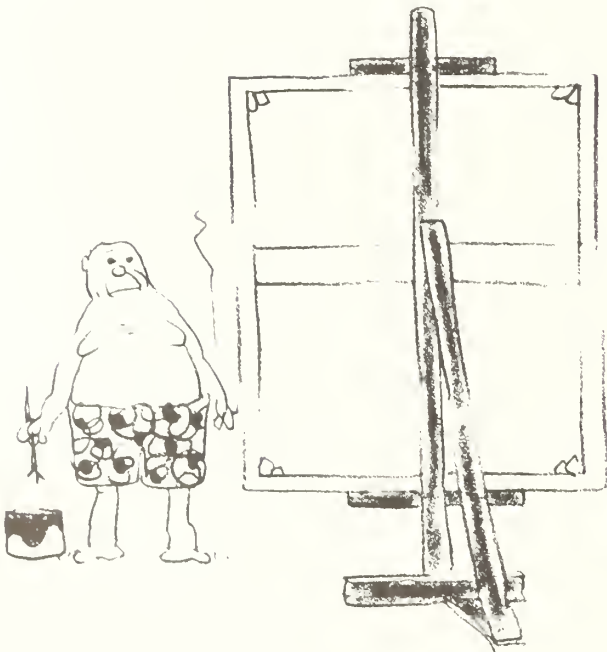
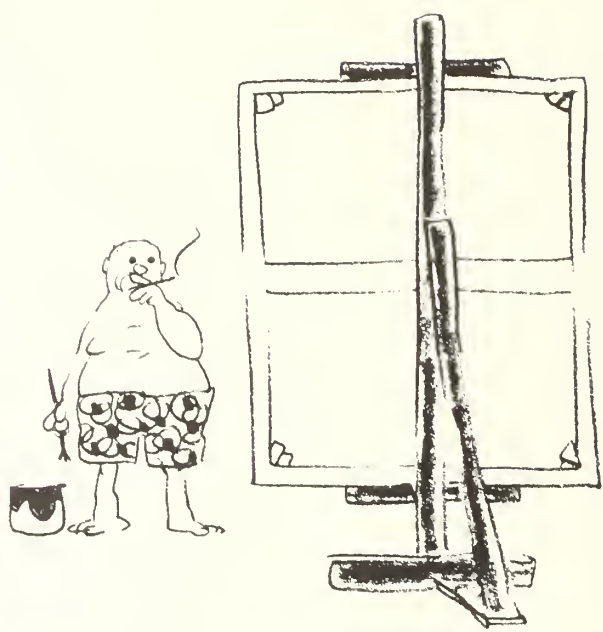
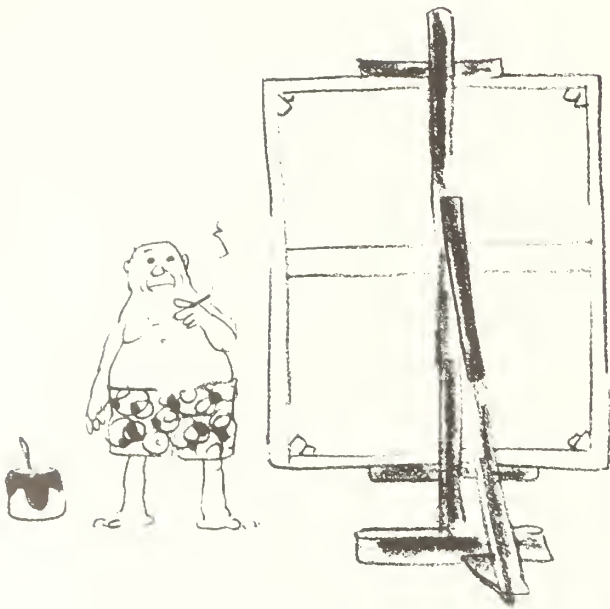
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| David Brown Gallery                      | Packard Gallery                       |
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| DeBerry Gallery                          | Pucci's                               |
| Different Ducks Restaurant               | Red Inn                               |
| East Hampton Center for Contemporary Art | Rising Sun                            |
| East End Gallery                         | Marian Roth Photography               |
| Euro Cafe                                | Sal's Place                           |
| Exposure Photo Lab                       | Pat Shultz Associates, Real Estate    |
| Exuma                                    | Seamen's Savings Bank                 |
| Eye of Horus Frame Shop                  | Jack Shainman Gallery                 |
| Fine Arts Work Center                    | Shank Painter Printing Company        |
| Flagship Restaurant                      | Snow Real Estate                      |
| D. Flax                                  | Spiritus Pizza                        |
| Floor Store                              | Stavaridis Gallery                    |
| Flyer's Boatyard                         | Studio Shop                           |
| Fox Run Restaurant & Bar                 | Stux Gallery                          |
| Roslyn Garfield, Attorney                | Tennyson Gallery                      |
| Roslyn Garfield Associates, Real Estate  | Ten Percent Revue                     |
| Giardelli/Antonelli                      | The Terrace Restaurant                |
| Group Gallery                            | Thunder Road                          |
| Health Associates of Provincetown, Inc.  | Time & Tide Gallery                   |
| Julie Heller Gallery                     | Watermark Inn                         |
| Impulse Gallery                          | Weathering Heights Restaurant         |
| Barbara Krakow Gallery                   | Wednesdays Gallery                    |
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# THE LAST LAUGH



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June 5 - June 11	<b>Altoon Sultan</b>
June 12 - June 18	<b>Gabriel Laderman and Rosemarie Beck</b>
June 19 - June 25	<b>Bill Leech</b>
June 26 - July 9	<b>David Vereano</b>
July 10 - July 16	<b>Ani Rosskam</b>
July 17 - July 30	<b>Ellen Lanyon</b>
July 31 - Aug 6	<b>Secret Pictures</b>
Aug 7 - Aug 20	<b>Valerie Hammond</b>
Aug 21 - Aug 27	<b>Marjorie Portnow</b>
Aug 28 - Sept 10	<b>Melissa Meyer</b>
Sept 11 - Sept 17	<b>Jeff Colby</b>
Sept 18 - Oct 1	<b>Jeanette Fintz</b>
Oct 2 - Oct 31	<b>Gallery Artists</b>

also representing: Laura Allis, Deborah Kamy Hull, Jeff Hull, Jim Jackson,  
Susan Mastrangelo, Tom Ouellette, and D. Jack Solomon.

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